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TAI-PAN

Producer:
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Director:
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From the following
writer:

James Clavell

October 2, 1967

Property of:

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Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios,
Culver City, California

FADE IN

SMALL SCREEN -- A MAP OF ENGLAND IN 1841 1

with towns and rivers and hills - LONDON dominating. Drawings of the Houses of Parliament - the Tower of London - Windsor Castle - Admiralty Arch. CAMERA centers the painting of PARLIAMENT which shows a two horse carriage leaving it...

THE PICTURE COMES TO LIFE ON A FILTHY JANUARY NIGHT 2

as the rainsoaked carriage hurries past. A liveried driver and flunkeys and a coat-of-arms on the door. A few ragged beggars and other horse-drawn carriages. Rain squalls and a knife-edged wind...

SUPE: JANUARY 25TH 1841

THE CARRIAGE 3

turns into Downing Street, stops outside of No. 10. Tall hatted 'Peelers' - the first Police Force in the world formed but a few years ago - salute as the carriage door is opened and the heavily bundled figure of LORD CUNNINGTON, the Foreign Secretary hurries for the door...

IN THE FOYER OF NO. 10 DOWNING STREET - A LIVERIED SERVANT 4

helps the Foreign Secretary out of his cloak-coat. Sound of angry voice nearby - quarrelling. Lord Cunnington is a tall man, patrician, with a beaked nose. He heads for a door, opens it. The voices surge out:

VOICES
I tell you it won't work, m'Lord Prime Minister. We've got to balance the budget...You've said that before and all... Why don't you listen...

IN THE CABINET ROOM - THE EIGHTEEN MEMBERS OF THE CABINET 5

are angrily grouped around the huge table. - the PRIME MINISTER VISCOUNT STENLY dominating; the others are viscounts, lords, except one commoner, SIR RICHARD CROSSE, Chancellor of the Exechequer. Coal and log fire in a huge fireplace - candles and lanterns...

SIR RICHARD CROSSE (to total hostility)
Then we'll have to bring in an Income Tax. 3 pennies to the pound.

PRIME MINISTER (angrily)
Never - not while I'm Prime Minister by God!

5
CONT'D
(2)

They simmer down as:

LORD CUNNINGTON
'evening m'Lord - gentlemen.

PRIME MINISTER
Ah, Cunnington! When can we expect a successful conclusion to the war in China? When can we trade again?

LORD CUNNINGTON
Nine months.

PRIME MINISTER
That's too long.

LORD CUNNINGTON
Six months is not too much to ask to open up China for the first time in history - to take five or six mainland ports for trade. Add three months for the despatches to get here. Nine months from today.

SIR RICHARD CROSSE
Then how do we balance the budget this year? Without their tea and the revenue it brings, we can't do it.

LORD CUNNINGTON (with a sneer)
I'm not concerned with 'Budget' my dear sir - merely with running the British Empire.

LORD HALL
How dare they stop trading with us.

VISCOUNT BLORE
What other recourse did the Emperor have? Our merchants were flooding his country with Bengal opium - against their law.

PRIME MINISTER (angrily)
You know damn well none of us want to trade in opium, m'Lord. You know damn well the Chinese Emperor - who owns ALL the TEA on earth - will only sell tea for silver. You know damn well the only way we can get enough silver is to sell opium to the Chinese.

5
CONT'D
(3)

VISCOUNT BLORE
"Sell" my Lord Prime Minister? You mean smuggle. Is there no limit to our hypocracy?

PRIME MINISTER
You're enough to try the patience of the devil! How else can we balance world trade?

VISCOUNT BLORE
You don't, m'Lord Prime Minister. You simply stop buying tea and then...

VOICES
You're mad...Give up tea...the Government wouldn't last a week! The whole of England'd revolt!

VISCOUNT BLORE (shouting them down)
...then, then you don't have to smuggle opium - or go to war to defend smugglers.

Some agreement amongst the ministers:

PRIME MINISTER (angrily)
Get it through your heads once and for all - they're traders - merchant princes some of them. And without them and their power, we can't survive!

CUT TO:

6

FULL WIDE SCREEN

and in gigantic letters:

"TAI-PAN"

and the remaining credits. AS THE CREDITS END:

CUT TO:

7

A MAP OF THE FAR EAST IN 1841

showing the relationship of India to China - most marked 'unknown' - and MACAO to CANTON to HONG KONG. The painting at Hong Kong shows a chill dawning - the Peak of the island dominating the harbour - the ships of the Expeditionary Force - mighty 74 gun ship-of-the-line, frigates, troopships, and merchantmen. The beautiful 24 gun opium clippers, greyhounds of the seas. Traders on the beach near the flag pole.

CUT TO:

8

EXT. HONG KONG - THE PAINTING COMES TO LIFE

and the Union Jacks wave bravely in the chill wind...

9

EXT. BEACH - DAY - BROCK

stares around the island angrily, moves his tobacco chew, GORTH his eldest son beside him. Both strong men, well dressed but verminous as is normal. Both bearded, both dangerous to pick a quarrel with. Beyond and all around are China Traders, officers of the Army and Navy, and the Marine party near the bare flagpole, in groups, stamping in the wind. Brock impatiently pulls out his timepiece:

BROCK
The pox on this stinking island!
And the pox on Struan!

COOPER, a thin-faced, 30 year old Yankee from Boston glances around:

COOPER
If it wasn't for him and <u>his</u> plan you'd never have won the war so easily. Hardly a man lost! If it wasn't for him we couldn't start trading again.

BROCK
If it wasn't for him we'd have five ports on the mainland - like Parliament ordered.

He stomps off. A moment, then Gorth goes after him, a strange hostility - part fear, part anger, in him... 9 CONT'D (2)

BROCK 10

strides down the beach, CAMERA with him; briefly seeing GORDON CHEN, a tall Eurasian youth, Chinese clothes, hair in a queue, European features; SKINNER, fat and droll, publisher; a painter painting the scene, and others. Brock heads for GLESSING, the Royal Naval Lieutenant - late twenties, patrician - who stares thoughtfully out at the flagship:

BROCK
Wot the hell's the delay for? Eight bells was the time to raise the flag an' it's an hour passed!

GLESSING (sharply)
The flag gets raised, Mr. Brock, when one of two things happen: either His Excellency comes ashore; or when there're signal cannons from the flagship.

BROCK
And when'll that be?

GLESSING (thin smile)
I notice you're not fully represented yet.

BROCK (angrily jerks a thumb towards an approaching boat)
You mean him?

GLESSING (to irritate Brock)
Isn't he the Tai-Pan -- of The Noble House? Isn't he the greatest of the China traders? Aren't you second to him?
(unveiled upper class contempt)
I suggest you possess yourself with patience. No one ordered any of you tradesmen ashore.

BROCK (reddens)
You'd better be learning the difference twixt tradesman and merchant.

He spits deliberately...

THE SPITTLE 11

almost flecks the impeccable buckled shoe....

GLESSING 12

flushes with rage - his hand tightens on his sword. Brock touches his forelock with mock humility as he turns away:

BROCK
Beg pardon!

CUT TO:

STRUAN'S LONG BOAT 13

noses towards the beach. Struan stands in the prow, rich frock coat and elegant boots, ROBB beside him. Struan has a gigantic presence as a man and he seems clean where others on the beach seem soiled. Robb is ten years younger - good-looking - filled with awe and respect for his brother:

ROBB
At long last, eh, Dirk?

STRUAN
My work's over now, Robb. Hong Kong's ours. In six months you take over as Tai-Pan.

ROBB (suddenly drained)
No. I'm not ready.

STRUAN
You're ready. Only in Parliament can I protect us and Hong Kong.

ROBB
Yes - but not now, not yet - in a year or two - I can't head the company - not like you. Not yet.

STRUAN
Is there any doubt in Sarah's mind?

Robb looks back at Resting Cloud. Shadows across his face:

ROBB
She's - no, she wants to go home...she and the children.

STRUAN
I'll send Culum out at the end of the year - he'll be through University by

(continued)

13 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN (continued)
then - Ian and Lechie will go to sea then they'll follow - choose one of them to succeed you.
(harsh)
In six months you rule The Noble House.

ROBB
I can't. Not alone.

STRUAN
A Tai-Pan is always alone. That's the joy and the hurt of it.

Struan turns his back. Robb stares at him, hating him, hating himself. The boat beaches...

STRUAN JUMPS ASHORE 14

and walks up the beach, Robb behind him. Many watch him, some awed, some openly jealous. He sees Gordon Chen, stops:

STRUAN
How're things going Gordon?

GORDON CHEN
Fine - thank you, sir.

STRUAN
How's your mother?

GORDON CHEN
Very well, thank you sir. She would wish me to give you her prayers for your safety. Every month she burns joss sticks in your honour.

STRUAN
Please send her my best wishes.

GORDON CHEN
You do her too much honour, sir.

STRUAN (after pause)
I hear you're working very hard for us.

GORDON CHEN
I'm trying sir. I hope to be of great service to The Noble House.

Struan nods and moves on...

15

STRUAN

comes up to the flagpole - Brock's face tightens:

STRUAN
Morning gentlemen. Beautiful morning by God.

BROCK
It's poxy cold and you're late.

STRUAN
It's bad joss to curse on a Tuesday, Tyler, very bad.

BROCK
This whole mess is bad joss. All China at our feet and all we takes is this...
(he waves his hand inland)
One rotton flyspittle of a barren sodding rock. It's ports on the mainland we need - like Parliament ordered.

STRUAN
What do they know? It's an island we need and an island we've got. On the mainland, we're at China's mercy. Here we're on British soil. Our prize of war's an impregnable base, the greatest harbour in Asia for the fleet, and the key to China!

BROCK
Rot! Not a thing'll grow here - everything'll have to come in by sea. And who's to pay for the upkeep? Us'n our trade, by God! And the Crown... You mark my words, when Parliament hears about this, there'll be hell to pay - for you and your weak-gutted lackey.

GLESSING
I'll thank you not to refer to his Excellency in those terms.

BROCK
And I'll thank you to hold your tongue.

15 CONT'D (2)

GLESSING
I never thought I'd see the day the Royal Navy was called upon to protect smugglers.

Tension on the beach...

STRUAN
Lots of pirates in these waters, Captain Glessing. Our ships have arms to protect themselves. No more.

GLESSING
Opium's against Chinese law. How many thousand cases have you smuggled - into China this year - three thousand - twenty thousand?

STRUAN
What we do here is well-known in Parliament.

GLESSING
Opium trading brings dishonour to the flag.

STRUAN (quietly, but suddenly very dangerous)
You'd better thank God for our trade, Captain Glessing. Without it, England'll have no tea again this year - and a universal poverty that'll tear her guts out.

A signal cannon from the flagship breaks the tension...

16

A CANNON ON THE FLAGSHIP

fires again.

CUT TO:

17

GLESSING'S HANDS

unroll the proclamation and he reads:

18

GLESSING

STRUAN

calm and tall...

19

In accordance with the document known as the Treaty of Chuen-pi, signed by His Excellency the Honourable William Longstaff on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria...and by the Mandarin Ti-sen on behalf of the Emperor of China, I, Captain Glessing, R.N., do hereby take possession of this island of Hong Kong on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty, in perpetuity, on this twenty-sixth day of January 1841. This soil is now English soil.

OTHERS

listening...

20

(beat)

GORDON CHEN

alone - veiled glances at him...

21

God save the Queen!

OFFICERS AND TRADERS

watching....

22

THE FLAG

breaks out at the flagpole head...

23

THE MARINES

fire a volley...

24

THROUGHOUT THE BEACH

there are cheers...

25

SMOKE BILLOWS FROM THE FLAGSHIP

as cannonade after cannonade goes throughout the fleet. Women's voices and children's cheers adding to the noise...

26

WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON RESTING CLOUD

which is the large converted hulk belonging to The Noble House, cheering - among them SARAH (Robb's wife) and Karen his daughter...

27

OTHER WOMEN AND CHILDREN

on merchantmen, and clippers, cheering...

STRUAN AND ROBB 28

cheering as gustily as the others. Some aren't cheering - those of Brock's persuasion. Struan calls out:

STRUAN
Would you join my brother and I in a toast to our new home?
(points)
There's breakfast for any that's hungry.

SEAMEN 29

are staggering ashore from the longboat carrying vast quantities of food in hampers and dishes - kegs of whisky, rum, brandy, beer, champagne in ice buckets - collapsible tables under the officious command of a wiry little Scot bosun, MCKAY. More cheers from the men on the beach...

BROCK'S FACE 30

is mottled...

BROCK
I'll not drink with you, or to your poxey little rock! But I'll give it another name - Struan's Folly!

STRUAN 31

his eyes are strange. The other traders and officers tense:

STRUAN
Hong Kong's big enough for all the China Traders. But whether it's big enough for the Struans and the Brocks - that's another question.

BROCK
I'll tell you right smartly, Dirk, old lad. The whole of China ain't.

Brock strides off - followed by Gorth - goes to his longboat, a few traders following.

CUT TO:

THE BAGPIPER 32

skirls his pipes and many of the merchants begin a frolicking eightsome reel. Some are drunk. Most are eating gargantuan amounts of food, the grease running down their chins carelessly

onto their grimed coats. Struan is with a group of traders, Robb and Cooper amongst them... 32 CONT'D (2)

SKINNER 33

the proprietor of the Oriental Times, a gross, slob of a man sidles up:

SKINNER
Would you give us a statement, Tai-Pan, for this week's Oriental Times? What's the next move of The Noble House?

STRUAN
Build of course. The first to build'll be the first to profit.

COOPER
To build we've got to own land, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
Of course there'll be a land sale, Jeff.

SKINNER (astonished)
Before the treaty's ratified by Parliament?

STRUAN
We're here to stay, aren't we? So why not get on with it, eh?

COOPER (liking him - lifts glass)
Then to Struan's Folly, eh?

STRUAN
If it is you'll all come down the sewer with us.

COOPER (to general laughter)
If you have anything to do with it at least it'll be done in style.

A sudden signal cannon. They look seawards...

THUNDER CLOUD 34

pride of Struan's 20 gun clipper ships is barrelling through the narrow channel. Beautiful...

35

STRUAN'S FACE

mirrors his pride. McKay, his bosun, hurries up with the crude binoculars. He focuses on the flag of The Noble House at the mast head: a Scottish lion entwined with a Chinese dragon...

VOICES
Three days early by God, Tai-Pan...
Beauty...She'll cost Brock a barrel of silver - I have fifty guineas on her...has to be a record run...
Thank God for news from home...
She's carrying the mail!!...The Noble House has done it again...

36

STRUAN

hands the binoculars to Robb:

STRUAN
Go aboard.

ROBB (automatically)
Yes, Tai-Pan.

CUT TO:

37

ABOARD WHITE WITCH - BROCK

is looking through his spyglass at Thunder Cloud. NAGREK THUMB, an ironhard Manxman of thirty, Captain of the White Witch, pride of Brock's fleet, beside him. 22 guns - powder and shot and seamen working. But a dirty ship, untidy, unloved. A Bosun, with a lash, supervising the raw, brutal crew - Gorth watching them. Sound of happy voices...

38

LIZA BROCK

comes ponderously up the gangway with their two daughters, LILLIBET is six; she hurls herself across the deck to Brock, curtsies, then launches herself into his arms and he whirls her around laughing. TESS is sixteen and ripe. Not pretty - even a little ugly - but enormously desirable and exciting...

39

BROCK

puts Lillibet down. Nagrek tries to keep his eyes off Tess...

LIZA
'morning Mr. Brock. 'morning Nagrek.

BROCK
'morning Liza. 'morning Tess, luv.

TESS 40

curtsies, runs into his arms, embraces him happily. Brock is almost beside himself with pride over his daughters:

LIZA (nodding at Thunder Cloud)
We're beaten again, lad.

BROCK
Aye. But there'll be a reckoning. He's outsmarted himself this time.

LIZA
How?

BROCK
He's putting his whole future on his island, eh? But we're not, eh? So he's got a weak spot now. At long last, by God.
(shouts out)
Get a longboat alongside Thunder Cloud for our mail, right smartly.

VOICES
Aye aye sir.

LIZA
I wonder if my new spectacles will be in the post. Come below girls. Leave thy Dad to his work.

LILLIBET
Carry me - please, please, please Mummy, please, please.

LIZA
Go on with you girl.

Even so she lifts her happily. As Tess passes Nagrek she lowers her eyes demurely - yet strangely adult. Liza notices Nagrek's veiled desire. Brock does not. She says nothing, goes below. Brock turns the spyglass back on Struan, hating him.

CUT TO:

FROM THE KNOLL IN HAPPY VALLEY - STRUAN 41

looks tiny in the broad expanse of the valley. In the harbour the fleets are at anchor, glittering under an early sun - Kowloon hazed beyond. Longboats ply back and forth, ship to shore, and many are converging on Thunder Cloud - now almost at her moorings...

42

STRUAN

looks up at the knoll, greatly satisfied. It commands the whole valley - obviously a perfect spot for a princely house.

CUT TO:

43

AT THE KNOLL TOP - A SAPLING

has been cut and notched and stuck upright in the soil. Then Struan's hands set another branch into the notch making a crude cross. Now he sheathes his dirk and pours brandy over it. A match and it is alight. The green wood smokes...

44

ABOARD CLIPPERS AND MERCHANTMEN

people begin to stare shorewards. A woman crosses herself superstitiously...

45

ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP HMS VENGEANCE - THE OFFICER OF THE WATCH

peers shoreward thru his telescope...

46

ABOARD WHITE WITCH - GORTH

hands the telescope to his father - Nagrek nearby...

GORTH
What's that devil doing?

BROCK (grimly amused)
It's an old Scots custom - a summons by a chief to the clan and kindred clans to rally to the cross for battle. To protect the cross and the land it stands in.

GORTH
He's no chief of a clan!

BROCK
Yes. But best clear decks for action.

Brock notices that the longboat is being launched slowly so he picks up a belaying pin and hurls it at a seaman. The man cries out in pain:

BROCK (roars)
I said to get our mail right smartly!

The seamen hurry - terrified - to do his bidding.

CUT TO:

AT THE KNOLL TOP - STRUAN 47

watches the firey cross, and the smoke. Then musing:

STRUAN
For better or worse...well, first Parliament - then the Cabinet. We'll serve you and make you a jewel in the crown. I will - and Robb and all the Tai-Pans that follow us.

He takes out a long thin cheroot, lights it in the flame...

STRUAN
And if ever The Noble House turns its back on you - destroy it with my blessing.

CUT TO:

A DISTANT LONGBOAT 48

is pulling shorewards from Thunder Cloud. In the stern is a tall thin youth, well dressed...

ON THE KNOLL TOP STRUAN 49

is seated on a rock, lost in thought. His eyes focus...

THE LONGBOAT 50

is nearing the Happy Valley shore...

STRUAN 51

peers down with disbelief. Then his happiness engulfs him and he shouts: "Culum---Culum" and tears off his coat and waves madly and rushes down the hill...

FAR BELOW - STRUAN 52

runs for the boat. Culum slips over the side into the shallows and begins to stumble towards his father. The longboat backs away. Now Struan is also in the shallows...

STRUAN'S JOY 53

begins to leave him and he slows, then stops twenty yards from his son as he sees the misery stark on Culum. Culum stumbles towards him:

53 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
They're dead - they're all dead, Father. Mumma and Lechie and Ian and little Winifred - Granny and Aunt Flora and cousins and --. Plague came --- it came to Glasgow last June...

Then his misery bursts and he is in Struan's arms and, in anguish, Struan tries to gentle him.

CUT TO:

54

SEAGULLS

mewing above the surf. Then following them and seeing Struan and Culum motionless, seated on rocks. A freshening wind...

55

CULUM

is calm now, his misery spent; Struan watches the sea, torn:

CULUM
They say it came by ship from Bengal. Ten - twenty thousand died in Scotland - more, many more in London. Fifty... a hundred thousand. In September it went away - it just went away. I, I didn't know what to do. So I waited for Thunder Cloud. There was no reason to stay.

STRUAN (after pause)
You told Uncle Robb?

CULUM
Yes.

STRUAN (gets up exhaustedly)
We'd best get aboard. What's done is done. That's joss.

CULUM (looks back at the knoll)
Is that where Our Great House'll be?
(Struan nods)
Have you named the valley yet?

STRUAN
Little Karen - your cousin - she wants to call it Happy Valley.
(hurting)
We'dve been happy there.

Culum remembers, takes out a heavily sealed letter:

55 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
Sorry father, I forgot. Captain Orlov said I was to give this to you.

Struan takes the letter, glances at it and breaks the seal. He reads it. Then his face closes and he rereads it with disbelief.

CUT TO:

ABOARD RESTING CLOUD IN THE GREAT CABIN - ROBB 56

stares up from the letter with equal disbelief:

ROBB
A run on the bank? On our bank?

STRUAN 57

is pouring a tot of brandy, Culum white faced beside him. The cabin is rich and clean and beautiful:

STRUAN
Aye -- it's clear enough. Our whole capital's gone. We're bankrupt.

CULUM
But surely father there's the ships and houses and estate in Scotland and well ---

STRUAN (overriding him)
A business needs cash. We've to pay bullion for the season's tea - or no tea. That's the Chinese Emperor's rule - no credit.
(to Robb)
We've got to meet our sight drafts in thirty days.

ROBB
Our credit's the best in Asia - we'll arrange a loan.

STRUAN
How, in time?

ROBB
The Chinese merchants! They owe us over half a million.

STRUAN
On paper, Robb. But you know they've not the bullion to back it. And they've to foot the cost of the war.

57 CONT'D (2)

ROBB
Perhaps we can delay payments - keep this quiet. If we can't trade this year, we'll lose everything.

CULUM (breaks silence)
Why not cut down expenses - sell half the ships and then with the money...

He stops abruptly, his heart pounding, as he sees the awful violence in Struan's face:

STRUAN
We're The Noble House -- the first in Asia. We'll remain first ---whatever the cost.

THE DOOR OPENS AND KAREN 58

runs in. Karen is four years old and she jumps into Struan's arms and kisses him. SARAH, thirty and old at thirty - heavy with child - stands in the doorway, her eyes on Robb:

KAREN
Hello Uncle Tai-Pan. Hello Daddy.

STRUAN
Hello Karen, lassie.

SARAH
Run along Karen, dear.
(the child obeys and she shuts the door)
You told him?

ROBB
No - not yet.

SARAH
We're leaving on the next boat, Dirk. The children and I. And Robb. Forever.

STRUAN
Robb can't leave.

SARAH
The deaths decided me. Life's too short. I've given five years and one baby to Struan and Company. That's enough.
(at Robb)
Tell him.

58 CONT'D (2)

ROBB
I'll never be Tai-Pan and don't want to be. Yes - I want to leave. Life's too short.

SARAH
You can buy us out.

Struan stares at her, begins to leave with:

STRUAN
Come on Culum.

SARAH
We're leaving and that's final! You WILL BUY US OUT!

STRUAN
Tell her, Robb.
(beat - direct to Sarah)
But you'd better keep your mouth tight shut, Sarah, or you'll be with him. In Debtor's prison.

CUT TO:

INT. HMS VENGEANCE - DAY - THE MAIN CABIN DOOR OPENS AND LONGSTAFF 59

comes out. He is mid-thirty, spare, foppish, patrician, mutton-chopped. A scarlet coated sentry salutes:

LONGSTAFF
Hello Dirk my dear fellow. I was so sad to hear.
(holds out hand)
You must be Culum.

CULUM
Yes, your Excellency.

Around them is one of the main gun decks - huge cannon, powder, shot. Sailors cleaning. Longstaff sees Culum studying him:

LONGSTAFF
What's the matter?

CULUM
Nothing, your Excellency. It's -- I just didn't expect anyone so young.

STRUAN
Empires are built by young men. They're only lost by old men.

Longstaff turns and leads the way...

60

THE MAIN CABIN

is vast. Diamond pane stern windows look out on the fleet and Hong Kong harbour. Elegant desk, deep leather chairs. Struan stares out at the flag on the beach:

STRUAN
When are you holding the land sale?

LONGSTAFF
Would you excuse us a moment, Culum?

STRUAN (to Culum's shock)
No need for that Will. Culum's a partner now. One day he'll be Tai-Pan. You can trust him as you trust me.

Culum is strangely unsettled. He tries to hide it as:

LONGSTAFF
I must congratulate you. That's a prize beyond price. Well, I thought as soon as the treaty's ratified, in six or seven months.

Struan turns to look at him. Calm and so very strong:

STRUAN
I thought you wanted to build at once. I liked your plan: that until you were officially Governor of Hong Kong all Government would be in your hands, that all land belonged to the Queen - that you'd auction leases. Important to get revenue for a new colony - the Cabinet would like that. I thought you very wise.

LONGSTAFF
A land sale. Of course. Say next month?
(to Culum)
As if we haven't enough worries, now we've got to build a colony - and that needs lots of hands.

STRUAN
Why not put Culum on your staff? We'll lend him to you for six months, part time.

LONGSTAFF
Admirable. Let's see. Would you like to run the Police Force? Have to have a Police.

60 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
No - no thank you sir. I don't know anything about that.

LONGSTAFF
Well...there must be something. Ah!
(big smile - to Struan's veiled amusement)
Deputy Colonial Secretary. You're in charge of the land auction.

CULUM
But I don't know anything about it.

LONGSTAFF (happily)
I'm sure your father - or Uncle can help you. Everyone's got to pull his weight, what? Excellent! Oh by the way Dirk, Ti-Sen says that he'll appoint a mandarin for Hong Kong within the week.
(at Struan's look; perturbed:)
What's the matter?

STRUAN
Did you agree?

LONGSTAFF (uneasily)
Well I didn't exactly agree. I said I thought it a good idea. I mean someone's got to be responsible for the heathen who come here, what?

STRUAN
They're trying to trick you again, Will. One mandarin destroys Hong Kong.

Longstaff would desperately like to ask why. To give him face, Struan deliberately looks at Culum, who naively asks:

CULUM
Why?

STRUAN
If you allow one, then you allow their whole system of graft, squeeze, and inequality. Every Chinese will be subject to him. Every Chinese trader will be sold licences and squeezed - and they'll squeeze us. The mandarin'll destroy those who help us - and help those who hate us. And they'll never give up until they've driven us out.

CULUM
Why?

60 CONT'D (3)

STRUAN
Because they're Chinese.
(to Longstaff)
You'll want to order Ti-Sen in the Queen's name that only HER representatives can appoint officials on Hong Kong.

LONGSTAFF
My thought entirely.

STRUAN (deliberately)
And that, in future, all Chinese residing on Hong Kong are British and subject to British law only.

LONGSTAFF (aghast)
But that exceeds my authority!

STRUAN
It's customary for Plenipotentiaries to exceed their authority. You're an innovator - a maker of history. What you do today effects the British Empire a hundred - two hundred years hence. You've said a thousand times - 'no interference on our island, by God!' And you're right.

LONGSTAFF
Yes - well I'd better write immediately, what? Don't know what I'd do without your father's advice, Culum.

Struan gets up and goes over to the door. Opens it:

STRUAN
His Excellency wants his secretary on the double.

SENTRY
Yessir.

Then Struan sees Nagrek Thumb standing waiting. Politely:

NAGREK
'day, Mister Struan. Mister Brock's compliments. He'd like to talk with you. He sayed it were important.

STRUAN
I'll see him ashore. At two bells in the first watch.

Struan watches Nagrek leave. Ominously.

CUT TO:

IN STRUAN'S TENT ASHORE - NIGHT - AN ORNATE TIMEPIECE ON A TABLE 61

reads a minute to nine. Candle-light. CAMERA wanders away to see Struan slumped in a chair, lost in thought. Through the open doorway the fleet is at anchor. The table in the tent is laden with food, almost untouched. Culum sits at it, nervously picking at some crumbs. Then two bells sound faintly throughout the fleet and he glances at his father, his nervousness increasing. Sound of approaching heavy footsteps crunching on the gravel. Culum almost begins to sweat. No sign that Struan has heard anything. The footsteps stop:

BROCK'S VOICE
Permission to come aboard, Dirk?

STRUAN
Aye, Tyler.

BROCK 62

comes in. Pleased with himself, but very much on guard. He nods at Culum. Then glances at an impassive Struan:

BROCK
Bad joss to lose a family, Dirk. I know how it feels. I lost two wives in childbirth - one of the kids as well. Bad joss.

STRUAN
Yes.

BROCK(at the tent)
Not much of a berth.

STRUAN
Hungry?

BROCK (sits and helps himself to deep dish apple pie)
Thank you kindly. Seems like the joss of The Noble House is run out.

STRUAN (pours Brock champagne)
Joss is a big word.

BROCK
Ah, chilled just right, lad, just right. You've a good cook. I'll give him a job.

STRUAN
He's got one.

62
CONT'D
(2)

BROCK (laughs)
Bad about thy bank. Very bad of them to gamble with customers' money.
(belches)
Beg pardon.
(he takes out some papers)
Oh yes, by the way, lad. I own eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds of Struan and Company sight drafts. We've been buying against such a time - least my son Morgan in London Town has.

STRUAN
A good investment, Tyler.

BROCK
No. I want my money. In 30 days. I'll keep the names of your ships. Bad joss to change the name of a ship. They'll be better under my flag.

STRUAN
You've got to get them first.

BROCK
In thirty days I have them. You'll get no credit in Asia now. Your trouble's public. You're finished. At long last.

STRUAN
Perhaps I'll wreck my ships before I let you have them.

BROCK
Some would - but not you. You're like me in that. Ships're special.
(he holds up glass and Struan calmly refills it)
Thank you kindly.

STRUAN
You and Morgan started the run on the bank?

BROCK (expansively)
Aye. 'least it was mostly Morgan. He's as sharp as a tack, that lad.

He looks across at Culum who is almost mesmerized by the violent undercurrents that race the tent:

BROCK
I heared you're in charge of the land sale, lad.

62
CONT'D
(3)

CULUM
Yes - yes sir.

STRUAN
It'll be fair. The highest bidder gets the land. We dinna cheat, Tyler. Others do. But we've no need.

BROCK (enraged)
Damn your eyes - you say I cheat?

STRUAN (flaring as suddenly)
You cheat all the time. You cheat your men and cheat your ships. You can't build forever with the cat o'nine tails.

BROCK
I do no more than others, by God. The lash keeps scum in line. Scum. You want to settle our score now - knife to knife, lash to lash, eh?

STRUAN
I told you before and I'll tell you a last time. One day I'll come after you - tomorrow perhaps, next week - but one day, by God, I'll come after you. And if you die before I'm ready I'll go after Gorth and Morgan and I'll stamp out your company.

The two men stare at each other almost at the breaking point. Both are armed. Culum is petrified. Then Struan relaxes but his eyes never leave Brock and he replenishes their glasses. Brock laughs:

BROCK
You're a rare'un. You're busted and you still pretend. Brock and Sons is Noble House now.

STRUAN
Not for thirty days, by God.

Brock drains his glass and gets up as he belches:

BROCK
Beg pardon. Proper belch water, ain't it?
(takes out a purse)
Here - buy thyself a coffin.

He throws down twenty golden guineas and leaves. A silence. Culum tries to regain his breath, his heart pounding. Struan seems to unwind as a cat would after danger has passed:

62
CONT'D
(4)

STRUAN
Better watch your back, Culum.
He'll be after you like I'm going
after Gorth.

CULUM (very unsettled)
The sins of the fathers are not
the fault of the son.

STRUAN
Gorth's worse than his father.

Culum stares at the gold coins, begins to pick them up:

STRUAN
Leave them be!

CULUM (shudders, stares
at them fascinated)
What are you going to do?

STRUAN
I'm leaving on the tide for the
Settlement.

CULUM
Where?

STRUAN (absently)
Canton - the Settlement at Canton.
Where we've always traded, laddie.
The only place we've ever been
allowed to set foot on mainland China.

CULUM
But why go there, father?

STRUAN
There's one man in Asia who <u>might</u>
help us. Jin-qua - one of the Co-Hong.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
The Co-Hong. The Guild of ten merchants
that monopolise <u>all</u> foreign trade for
the Emperor.

CULUM
He'll lend you the money?

STRUAN (tiredly)
He might lend us the credit - though
I don't know if I'll be able to
afford the price.

62 CONT'D (5)

CULUM
Can I come with you?

STRUAN
Not this time. Good night, laddie.

Culum gets up, beads of sweat on his forehead. He almost says something. Then he begins to pick up the coins:

STRUAN
I told you to leave them alone.

CULUM
I can't. I've - I've got to have them. They're - they're mine now.
(turns back)
Good luck - good joss in Canton, father.

CUT TO:

THE SETTLEMENT AT CANTON - DAY - WONG 63

Struan's personal servant is hurrying across the vast walled square which fronts the Pearl River. Huge colonnaded buildings. Hundreds of Chinese peddlers and lean-to shops. Thousands of junks and sampans plying up and down stream. Hustle and bustle of traders hurrying to and fro. Struan comes out of the main door of his 'factory' which is the largest, stands in the doorway. It fronts the garden which is filled with traders walking about, chattering. This is the only place where there are no Chinese. Traders see him. Many are sad, some filled with pleasure. Wong comes up to him, whispers:

WONG
Master Jin-qua still not back, Tai-Pan. Maybe tomollow.

STRUAN (grimly)
You say 'maybe tomollow' three weeks now. When come back, heya?

WONG
Soon. Never mind. Soon come back. Maybe tomollow.

STRUAN
All right Wong.

Wong goes into the factory. Struan covers his anxiety, walks down into the "garden", outwardly careless of the stares. Gorth is talking to some traders, Brock over by the wall deep in conversation with other traders. Cooper intercepts Struan:

COOPER
How's it go, Tai-Pan?

63 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Fine. I've just bought a million pounds of tea.

COOPER (laughs as do other traders)
I hope you settle with Brock. Asia won't be the same without you.

STRUAN
A wager: twenty thousand guineas says The Noble House'll have the first of the teas home again.

Cooper gasps, doesn't answer. Struan looks around. No takers. A hush falls at the size of the stake. (The wager would be equivalent to 400,000 pounds today):

COOPER (incredulously)
Twenty thousand guineas?

GORTH (sneering)
There's only four days twixt you and Debtor's Prison, so how you going to pay?

BROCK (quickly)
Gorth doesn't mean that other'n as a joke.

He comes over as Struan hardens and Gorth flushes angrily:

STRUAN
You'd better teach him manners along with seamanship.

GORTH
I'm as good a captain as you.

STRUAN
If it weren't for your father, you'd be the laughing stock of Asia.

GORTH
Why you son of a -----

BROCK (overriding him, aghast)
Hold your tongue!
(to Struan)
Why bait the lad?

STRUAN
Not baiting him, Tyler. Just stating facts. Twenty thousand guineas, Gorth. Your money - not your father's.

Gorth stares at him with important rage, his hand near his knife: 63 CONT'D (3)

BROCK
No lad's got that amount of money to gamble.

STRUAN (to Gorth)
So don't meddle into affairs of men until you can back your mouth like a man!

BROCK
I'll take the wager.
(hardening)
And we'll settle your sight drafts at 8 bells the night they're due - at the flagpole in Hong Kong.

Struan nods, walks out into the square.

CUT TO:

INT. BROCK'S OFFICE - GORTH 64

is staring sullenly off screen:

BROCK'S VOICE
You want a knife in your heart? You call a man a son of a bitch in these waters and he's the right to call you out and fight fair and square.

Brock's hand backhands him suddenly...

BROCK 65

is angry and dangerous. Blood seeps from Gorth's mouth; but he shows no pain - he's been hit so many times before. The office is large but dirty and untidy:

GORTH (thickly)
I can kill him - I know I can.

BROCK
You're not strong enough yet - nor smart enough yet. Don't forget you only fight that devil once. Another thing: never challenge a man on a gambling debt. Nor kick him in the groin when he's helpless. That's not our code.

GORTH
A pox on any code!

Again a violent backhand. Gorth's control is near snapping: 65 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
The Brocks live by the code. Open. Man to man. And don't you forget it!

He raises his hand:

GORTH
DON'T HIT ME AGAIN DAD! Don't do it or by the Lord Jesus Christ I'll hit you back.

He bunches his massive fists and waits. Now they are no longer son and father, but enemies. Brock hesitates, knowing there's a parting of the ways. Inflexible, both of them. Then Brock lowers his hand, gets hold of his breathing:

GORTH
By the Lord Jesus Christ you've hit me a last time.

He wipes the blood dribbling his cheek.

CUT TO:

INT. STRUAN'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT - STRUAN 66

is seated in a highbacked carved chair at the huge circular table. Fine chandelier. Hundreds of candles. Fire in a grate. His food is untouched. He looks up, his hope flooding as the door opens...

WONG
Mass'er!

But Wong is shoved out of the way by a filthy young Hoklo boatwoman and another servant trying to restrain her:

GIRL
Heya mass'er, Tai-Pan want, two dolla only!

STRUAN
You -- ah out!. Plenty quick!

The girl's conical hat falls out and then he recognizes her thru the grime and he laughs delightedly:

STRUAN
She can stay.

The girl spits out a stream of abuse at the astonished servants as they depart. Once the door is closed:

STRUAN
What the hell're you doing here, May-may?

66
CONT'D
(2)

MAY-MAY (beaming)
Plenty good see you, Tai-Pan, never mind.

STRUAN (he lifts her happily and delightedly)
Good God, you stink to high heaven.

MAY-MAY
You would too if you to wear these smell clothses.

STRUAN
'If you wore these smelly clothes'.

MAY-MAY
Put me down, Tai-Pan.
(he does so and she bows sadly)
I arrive here uninvited from Macao, and in great sadness because you loose your Supreme Lady and all children by her except one son. Terrible joss. Sorry --- sorry, so sorry.

STRUAN
Thank you, lass...thank you... but no amount of grief can bring them back.

MAY-MAY
I burned incense for their safe rebirth. But I do not know your custom. How long should I dress in white?

STRUAN
No mourning, lassie. That's over.
(beat)
Now why did you leave Macao?

MAY-MAY (after pause)
First bath, then change then eat then talk.

STRUAN
There're no clothes here.

MAY-MAY
My worthless slave, Ah Sam, is under stairs never mind. Where is bath, Tai-Pan? And I will order proper food.

Struan pulls a cord and almost at once the door opens and Wong stands there gaping:

STRUAN
Show lady bath, savvy.

May-may sweeps out imperiously. To his delight. 66 CONT'D

CUT TO: (3)

THE CHANDELIER 67

reflects a thousand tiny images as May-may runs into his arms and they kiss and he swings her around:

MAY-MAY'S VOICE
I miss you fantastical, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
I miss you fantastical, May-may!

MAY-MAY
God's Blood, mind my hair, Tai-Pan!

MAY-MAY 68

is exquisite - alabaster. Laughter in her eyes. Her hair dressed beautifully. Flowing silk gown. He sits with her in his arms in the huge carved chair as she tidies a lock of hair:

STRUAN
Now - how did you get here, eh?

MAY-MAY
I buyed cheapest passenger on little boat and dirty myself for safety. I was very sea sicked. You owe me fifty cash!

STRUAN
Pay it out of your allowance. I didn't ask you here, by God.

MAY-MAY
God's Blood, that's no way to treat your adoration lady, by God.

STRUAN
Will you stop swearing!

MAY-MAY
I like to swearing. I learn English from Gordon Chen but from you I learn swearing. Aycc-yah, I miss you fantastical, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
How's the child?

68 CONT'D (2)

MAY-MAY
Even at ONE he has the bad temper of his father. He is at home, safe in Macao.
(changing now:)
This news I read in Skinner-man's paper - that lump of dogmeat Brock is breaking you with debt of huge monies? Is true?

STRUAN
Yes. Unless I can get finance.

MAY-MAY
Is terrifical simple to solve this badness. Kill Brock.

STRUAN
Yes. That's one way.

MAY-MAY
One way - another - you will find a way.

STRUAN
Why?

MAY-MAY
Because of me. Because I'm no turtledung boatwoman or Cantonese whore and I don't enjoy second best either ---
(she laughs)
I like you when you're angry. But you don't frightens me, Tai-Pan. I know I piease you too much - as I also know when I am second best another will take my place. That is joss.
(cheerfully)
God's death I'm hungry.

CUT TO:

69 MAY-MAY'S FINGERS

delicately peel an appetising prawn. She passes it to him:

MAY-MAY
Here Tai-Pan.

He is halfway thru another and his dish is filled with the tails of many others. The dining room is in his own special quarters. Rich. Masculine:

STRUAN
No thanks, I'm full.

MAY-MAY
Eat them. They are good for your vigor and make you potent. Improve love-makings fantastical.

69 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN (sharply)
Give over lass!
(as she eats - disgusted)
And I've told you before - don't eat the heads.

MAY-MAY (mimicking him)
And I've told you before the heads are the best part!
(wipes her lips delicately)
Are all Europeans like you? Not like to talk about man-womans things, open, heya?

STRUAN
Certain things are private and that's that.

MAY-MAY
It's good to talk. How else can one improve, heya? Man is man and woman woman. You don' get shock about food. Sex is food, never mind. Why so crazy eh?

CUT TO:

70 DANCING SHADOWS FROM THE BEDROOM FIRE

colour the ceiling. After pause, soft and gentle:

MAY-MAY'S VOICE
Look, there's a dragon.

STRUAN'S VOICE
It's a ship. You warm enough?

71 STRUAN AND MAY-MAY

are in the vast four-poster bed. Her hair is down now, silky. The room is rich. Coal and wood fire:

MAY-MAY
Always, near you. Your custom is you may only have one wife, at one time, heya?

STRUAN
Yes.

MAY-MAY
Chinese custom is more sensible - many wives together if you're man enough. But only one Tai-tai of course.

STRUAN
What's that?

71
CONT'D
(2)

MAY-MAY
Tai-tai? Ah - she is first wife - supreme wife. Tai-Pan means Supreme Leader, eh? Tai-tai -- 'Supreme of Supreme'. In the home the first wife is Supreme of Supreme. How soon will you marry? What is your custom?

STRUAN
I don't think I'll marry again.

MAY-MAY
You should. An English - or Scottish. But first you should marry me.

STRUAN (after pause)
Aye, perhaps I should.

MAY-MAY (after pause)
Aye, perhaps you should. I would be Tai-tai.

Abruptly Struan motions her to silence, slips out of bed, cat-like, a dirk in his hand. Now soft footsteps approaching:

WONG'S VOICE (softly)
Tai-Pan!

STRUAN
Aye?

WONG'S VOICE
Jin-qua home. See Tai-Pan now, heya? Plenty quick!

CUT TO:

72

JIN-QUA

is an old old man with a marvelous face. Richly dressed:

JIN-QUA
Heya, Tai-Pan. Sit, eh? Eat plees.

73

STRUAN

sits at the table in the huge, rat-infested warehouse by a river. The table is incongrously set with food and tea. Dozens of large crates and many armed Chinese in the shadows. At a signal from Jin-qua they go out, except one man, WU - strong and tall. Struan uses chopsticks well and he helps himself to a little, eats delicately. Sips his tea:

STRUAN
Plenty good - ah!

73
CONT'D
(2)

JIN-QUA
Ayee-yah - not good.

A long silence. They eat and wait. Then Jin-qua says:

JIN-QUA
You want see Jin-qua, heya?

STRUAN
Jin-qua do good business out Canton?

JIN-QUA
Hear Devil Brock have Tai-Pan by t'roat. Want huge monies.

STRUAN
Hear Mandarin Ti-sen have merchants by t'roat. Want huge monies.

JIN-QUA
Ti-sen very angry. Why send bad letter?

STRUAN
Longstaff very angry. Why try bad trick?

JIN-QUA
Hear Tai-Pan family all dead. Also Tai-tai. Bad joss, heya?

STRUAN
Bad joss.

JIN-QUA
Hear May-may arrive Canton. Very bad. Against Chinese law any womans in Settlement.
(smiles toothlessly)
Why you have one son only by her, heya? You want medicine?

STRUAN
When I want I ask, eh?

JIN-QUA
Wen I sell May-may you-ah?

STRUAN
Three years back.

JIN-QUA
Ten thousand sterling in silver, heya? Werry expensive.

STRUAN
Cheap. Jin-qua good frien'.

73
CONT'D
(3)

JIN-QUA
How long frien'?

STRUAN
Twenty year.

Jin-qua waves a frail hand at Wu who opens one of the crates. Struan gasps as he sees it full of bullion - silver bars. Jin-qua's eyes slit even more:

JIN-QUA
Here one million sterling. Jin-qua borrow. Very hard. Very expensive. Werry. You want - maybe Jin-qua lend.

STRUAN (sweating)
Man do favor - must return favor.

JIN-QUA
Buy tea 20% above market price - sell opium 20% below market price this year.

STRUAN
Agreed.

JIN-QUA
Deal only Jin-qua, Jin-qua sons and sons of sons thirty year. Add 20% market price.

STRUAN
Twenty years - five percent.

JIN-QUA
Thirty - 15%.

STRUAN
Twenty - six percent!

JIN-QUA (angrily - pretended perhaps, or real)
Ayee-yah! Bad, plenty bad. Big interest, werry expensive. Ten year six percent, ten year seven, ten year eight. Ten year five.

STRUAN
Agreed. At four percent.

JIN-QUA
One Mandarin for Hong Kong.

Struan's heart sinks. A deadly silence. Then his face closes and he gets up:

STRUAN
Never. Never by God.

73 CONT'D (4)

JIN-QUA (blandly)
Why stand, heya?
(chuckles delightedly)
Ti-sen want mandarin, not Jin-qua. Ti-sen dirty Manchu foreigner - like Emperor. Jin-qua lend Jin-qua money, heya? Five percent, heya?

STRUAN (sits, sweating with relief)
Yes.

JIN-QUA
Soon Jin-qua send one son of son - Tai-Pan sen' London all same your son school, heya? Watchee.

STRUAN (tries to hide his astonishment)
Agreed.

JIN-QUA
Buy Jin-qua land in Hong Kong. Five lac dollar. Keep safe.

STRUAN
Agreed.

JIN-QUA
Gordon Chen, good, bad?

STRUAN
Good. Work plenty hard.

JIN-QUA
You lend twenty thousand dolla.

STRUAN (studies him curiously, then:)
What interest?

JIN-QUA
Half profit.

Jin-qua pulls one hand out of his sleeve and places four half coins on the table:

JIN-QUA
Last: man bring other half - Tai-Pan of Noble House grant favor.

STRUAN
What favor?

73 CONT'D (5)

JIN-QUA
Doan' know-ah, Tai-Pan. Not my lifetime maybe. Son maybe. But one coin - Tai-Pan grant favor - whatever asked. Can?

(Struan stares down at the coins. Awed at the enormity of his gamble)

Fav'r maybe against law, yours, mine, savvy?

He leans back and his eyes slit even more. Struan lifts up the coins. Examines them. An enormous silence. Then:

STRUAN
Agreed.

JIN-QUA (waves at crates)
I put bullion on lorcha tomollow night. Very trusty crew. Werry dangerous, Tai-Pan. No can help get Hong Kong, eh? Danger, plenty pirate, eh?

STRUAN
Yes, never mind. Tomollow I send paper - all put down with my sign.

JIN-QUA
No want paper. Word Tai-Pan enough.

(waves at bullion - concerned)

Werry plenty danger. I sen' trusty crew.

STRUAN
Thank you Jin-qua. Not forget. Not forget all this.

The old man smiles, his face parchment.

CUT TO:

THE WHARF AT CANTON SETTLEMENT (NIGHT) 74

has some boats tied up against it. The night is clean, and moonlit and is mostly bare of traffic - though a few junks and sampans course the waterways with riding lanterns. A lorcha noses the wharf and a lamp lights briefly...

THREE SHADOWS 75

slip out of Struan's factory and hurry across the square. Struan easy to recognize, then May-may, once more in coolie clothes; AH SAM. Behind them a light in one of the windows as a curtain is moved. Perhaps someone is watching - perhaps not...

STRUAN 76

helps the women aboard as Wu casts off hastily. There are three in the crew. They eye May-may appreciatingly...

THE LORCHA 77

moves ponderously, low in the water line out into the channel, heads downstream. Struan goes below. A curious light up river - perhaps a signal, perhaps not.

CUT TO:

IN THE HOLD - A CROWBAR 78

opens one of the crates. Silver bars. Below it are others. Satisfied, Struan replaces the lid. Wu watches suspiciously. May-may is very uneasy, nauseated by the stench. To one side are muskets, bows and arrows, cutlasses, powder, shot:

STRUAN
How many know, heya?

WU
Wu. Others know...

He draws his finger across his throat. Struan motions him out, closes the door, takes out two pistols as:

MAY-MAY (cheerfully)
So much is huge temptations, Tai-Pan. One risk and ten, twenty generation would be safe. Every pirate in China come quick.

STRUAN
Can you use one of these, May-may?

MAY-MAY
Wat for shoot gunses? Me I am civilisationed fright filled womans - of great beauty and cleverness yes - but no gunses.

He shows her how to hold the trigger:

STRUAN
Bolt the door after me. If anyone comes in but me - kill him.

He sticks the other pistol in his belt, picks up a fighting iron - a thonged steel haft to which is attached iron bars linked together, and at the end a spiked iron ball - and goes out. May-may shudders as the boat pitches sickeningly.

CUT TO:

ON DECK STRUAN 79

douses the stern light. Now well down river. The moon is strong enough to cast shadows - no clouds. He calls the crew, points at a fishing basket:

STRUAN
All knives, guns in basket, heya!

WU (angrily)
No can! Plenty pirate in riv--

Struan's fist chops him in the throat, sends him reeling:

STRUAN
All knives, guns on deck.

A nervous pause and then the three men, throw their knives down. Carefully Struan searches the first man, then the second. He finds another knife. He chomps the man viciously, then shoves the man overboard. The third man drops another knife. Wu's knife is parked in the basket. Struan points at sail:

STRUAN
Ho!

The crew jump to give more sail. He takes the helm...

THE LORCHA. 80

makes way slowly, weighed down by the bullion. Boats pass it up stream and down stream. The shore indistinct.

CUT TO:

STRUAN - ON THE POOP - DAWN 81

senses that he's being followed. To his horror he sees a big lorcha bearing down on him - Brock and Gorth on the quarterdeck. He shoves the tiller hard over and his boat cuts dangerously across the bows of another, putting her and others between Brock and himself...

ON THE QUARTERDECK OF BROCK'S LORCHA BROCK AND GORTH 82

are near the gunnel. Crew of twenty armed, tough Englishmen:

BROCK
I'm going below. If you 'happen' to ram a lorcha - without flag or lights - that'll be terrible bad.

GORTH
How'd'you know the buillion's aboard?

82 CONT'D (2)

BROCK (mock surprise)
Bullion, Gorth? That's only a rumor! How could old Jin-qua borrow that amount?
(hardens)
No cannon mind - not less he fires at us first. We ain't going to pirate him.

GORTH
I'll hit him amidships. He'll sink like a stone.

Brock goes below. Gorth tears his eyes away, orders more sail.

CUT TO:

STRUAN'S LORCHA 83

fleeing...

BROCK'S LORCHA 84

chasing. Always to windward, waiting to pounce...

BOATS AND JUNKS 85

on the Pearl River take avoiding action and seamen curse.

CUT TO:

STRUAN 86

carries May-may on deck. She is white-faced and very seasick. But she still holds the pistol...

STRUAN
You'll be safer here.

His crew eye him nervously. Brock's lorcha is not far off...

GORTH 87

is bearing to windward well. The crew respond to his cursing orders, terrified of him. A slow man gets a belaying pin in his gut...

STRUAN 88

shoves the boat on the opposite tack to gain time, rips his shirt into shreds. On the deck are arrows and a bow.

CUT TO:

89

THE RIVER TRAFFIC

thins and now Struan is helpless. Gorth hurls his lorcha at Struan's...

90

STRUAN

shoves the tiller over but the wind is out of his sails. He picks up the bow and arrow and lights the oil soaked rags. They flare. He aims at Brock's sails...

91

THE FLAMING ARROW

soars into Gorth's tinder-dry main sail, but fails to catch amid shouts of 'Watch out!' Another arrow. This catches the sail and it begins to burn but it's too late and...

92

GORTH'S BOWS

smash a glancing blow amidships...

93

IN THE HOLD OF STRUAN'S LORCHA

the iron ram smashes thru the side making a gaping hole and scatters the huge crates across the hold ripping one apart. The silver cascades as water rushes in...

94

THE TWO BOATS

start drifting apart as some of Gorth's men try to halt the fire and others ready muskets - ready to fire if Struan fires at them, Gorth aiming the small two pounder. His sails are well alight and sparks fall. Struan's ship is heeling at an impossible angle, a gaping hole amidships. Brock comes on deck. Struan aims his last arrow at Gorth...

95

THE ARROW

buries itself into the bulkhead. Gorth wipes his sweat off, laughing, as:

GORTH
Get that fire out, you scum.

BROCK
Launch the longboat. Pick up survivors.

GORTH
The pox on that! I'll run over him.

95 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
I'll put a bullet in your head if you kill Struan any way but face to face.

Gorth tears his eyes off Brock, peers into the gloaming.

CUT TO:

96 STRUAN'S LORCHA

still has the wind in her sails and is making way - behind them, Brock's rigging and sails are burning furiously. The lorcha is heeled over at a tremendous angle. Struan checks that May-may is okay and then hurries below, Wu following.

97 WATER IS POURING THRU THE HOLE

amidships. But, now that she has settled, only a few inches are below the waterline, the list of the ship being held by the shifted crates. His hope brimming, Struan shoulders another crate away from the hole and the ship heels a little and inches out of the water more. Wu rushes to help.

CUT TO:

98 THE CRATES

are balanced nicely, the hole partially stuffed with canvas. Struan peers thru the hole to see, in the distance...

99 BROCK'S LORCHA

sailless and stationary, rigging still smouldering. Faint shouts as the crew launch the longboat. Struan smiles:

STRUAN
Safe now. No catch us now.

WU
Go shore. Better.

STRUAN
No. Go down-stream.

WU (turns back at door)
All way Macao?

Struan nods. Wu shrugs, exits. Struan looks around, checks everything as he lights a cigar and inhales gratefully. Then he bunches the fighting iron and leaves...

STRUAN - COMING ON DECK 100

stares appalled at the pistol almost in his face. Brief glimpse of May-may - one of the seamen holding his hand over her mouth, another the same with Ah Sam, and Wu pulls the trigger. Struan twists and the bullet sears his cheek and the burning powder pock marks his face, almost blinds him...

WU AND THE OTHER SEAMEN 101

hack at him with belaying pins but Struan's dirk is out and he guts one man and smashes the butt of the fighting iron into Wu's face...

THE FIGHTING IRON 102

uncurls and slashes half the face off another attacker. Wu jumps for Struan but the knife catches him, and he screams...

STRUAN 103

is like a mad bull - but his killing is dreadful and very careful. He stamps one man senseless, wheels looking for the next. But there is no other attacker. Just moans from three of them. Ah Sam stares at him petrified - May-may very strangely - as he slowly comes back from demon to man.

CUT TO:

THE LORCHA - NEAR SUNSET 104

is listing badly - but still making way slowly. The sun is almost down. River traffic - rice fields - grand sun setting...

MAY-MAY 105

comes on deck with a silver brick wrapped in paper covered with Chinese characters. Struan dabs salt water on his face:

STRUAN
What're you doing?

MAY-MAY
It's time to make offering to sea god - so we don't sink.

STRUAN
I've told you a thousand times there's no other God but God. You're a Christian, damn it.

105
CONT'D
(2)

MAY-MAY
Absolutely yes, but I am only a one year Christian so your barbarian God will have to be patient with me.
(over his weary protests)
It is Chinese river, heya? And one little pretend won't harm, Tai-Pan. In these god things you must be a little Chinese.

And before he can stop her, she holds the offering over the water - keeps her eyes closed and lets the paper fall into the water and quickly hides the silver in her sleeve, comes back happily:

MAY-MAY
There! Now we're safe.

STRUAN (exploding)
That's a cheat!

MAY-MAY (hissing)
Will you please keep voices down, Tai-Pan. Maybe Sea God will hear and you'll spoil everything. Are you crazy mad? What for should a God want real silver? To buy real clothses? Gods are Gods and people people. Ayee-yah, how can one understand barbarians?

STRUAN
Why should we whisper, eh? If the god's Chinese how the hell can he understand English?

MAY-MAY (frowns, then shrugs cheerfully)
A god is a god. Maybe he's out anyway and he won't help us and we'll still sink never mind.

Struan laughs, and hugs her:

STRUAN
You're very special, lassie. Very.

MAY-MAY (lightly)
Special enough to make your Tai-tai?

STRUAN (after pause - as lightly)
Perhaps. Perhaps not.

MAY-MAY
Chinese are very patient. But also I am a woman.

They watch each other - then he glances at...

106

TWO ARMED LORCHAS

are rounding the bend in the river ahead, the flag of The Noble House on the forepeaks...

107

STRUAN

relaxes contentedly. May-may turns back to him as:

STRUAN
Dirty yourself and keep your face covered.
(pause)
I'll see you safe at home in Macao.

MAY-MAY
And you?

STRUAN (hardens)
Then China Cloud and the south coast of Hong Kong Island. I've to settle The Noble House.

CUT TO:

108

INT. CHINA CLOUD'S HOLD - DAY - THE BULLION

is stacked in neat piles under the listing lantern. The ship is heeled over - sound of rushing sea and speed. In the foreground Struan's hand holds an open bible - the four half coins sealed into the cover. He snaps the book closed. Robb and Culum stare at him - Culum awed, Robb with hatred:

STRUAN'S VOICE
If you both agree to my conditions - swear on the Holy Book and let's go aloft.

ROBB (hating him)
I've told you I'm going home. I don't want to be Tai-Pan.

CULUM
Ten years! That's a lifetime, father.

STRUAN (to Robb)
Two more years isn't much to ask from you Robb. And you Culum - you've got to be worth training.

ROBB
I've already served the company for twelve. Say I don't agree.

108
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN
Then this bullion doesn't salvage this version of The Noble House and you go home penniless.

ROBB
That's not fair.

STRUAN
Yes. But the bullion was loaned to me - on my word. I have to protect it.
(to Culum)
There's no guarantee that you'll ever take over as Tai-Pan from Robb, Culum. You'll have to prove yourself. That's clan law and a good one.

ROBB
Perhaps he'll never get my approval.

STRUAN
That's your decision - when you're Tai-Pan.

ROBB (anguished)
I can't deal with the Jin-qua's or Longstaff - let alone Brock - or kill pirates. Please let me go - let me take a little and leave.

STRUAN
It's two years with everything. Or nothing.

ROBB (after pause)
I think you'll regret it.
(puts hand on bible)
I agree to your conditions and swear that I will never resign as Tai-Pan until I have chosen a worthy successor and have sworn him to abide by these same conditions.

Robb kisses the book, sweating. A sudden scurry of feet all thru the ship and shouts of "All hands on deck" and warnings. Struan tenses - Robb filled with anxiety, Culum too:

CULUM
What's going on?

STRUAN
Let's finish this first. Do you agree lad? Yes or no.

Culum puts his hand on the bible, overwhelmed by his father.

CUT TO:

A GANGWAY, AS STRUAN 109

races up it onto the quarterdeck. CAPTAIN ORLOV is there. He is almost a dwarf - a hunchback of immense strength and presence, binoculars to his eyes...

AHEAD IS A FLEET OF WAR JUNKS 110

covering the horizon from the shore of Hong Kong to the small island of Pokliu Chow...

STRUAN 111

picks up his binoculars as Robb and Culum come on deck:

ORLOV
Turn and run, Tai-Pan?

STRUAN
No - we've the speed of them, Captain Orlov. Can you read their flag?

ORLOV
Not yet.

STRUAN
Set royals and fore royals!

SAILORS 112

spring to do his bidding, racing into the shrouds. The clipper is sailing fast but now increases speed:

LOOKOUT
Ho, quarterdeck! Look aft!

STRUAN 113

swings to look aft...

ANOTHER FLEET OF JUNKS 114

is breaking from behind Pokliu Chow. China Cloud is trapped between the fleets...

ORLOV 115

curses. Struan studies the fleet through binoculars as:

115 CONT'D (2)

ORLOV
Ready to go about ---

STRUAN
Avast there, I'm on the quarterdeck! Steady as she goes!

ORLOV (sourly)
Aye aye Tai-Pan - you're on the quarterdeck.

STRUAN
It's the Green Lotus!

Orlov gasps - Robb whitens. Fear swarms the ship:

ROBB
What's that devil doing in these waters?

STRUAN
The bullion!
(curtly to Orlov)
Battle stations!

ORLOV
Battle Stations! All cannon ready, load grape! Water barrels and torches ho!

SEAMEN 116

rush to the cannons and prepare the ships...

STRUAN 117

is calm and happy now:

CULUM
What's the Green Lotus mean?

STRUAN
The flag of Wu Fang Choi - the greatest pirate in Asia. A sadist warlord who controls perhaps three thousand junks and perhaps two thousand miles of coastline. Even we pay him a yearly tribute - as do the Chinese. Cheaper than losing slow merchantmen.

CULUM
We're trapped, aren't we?

STRUAN
We'll blow a hole thru their ranks, never mind!

Culum whitens. Eight bells sound!

117 CONT'D (2)

ORLOV
Permission to wind the chronometer?

STRUAN
Aye - take Mister Culum. Show him what to do.

They exit. Robb tries to cover his fear as he stares ahead.

CUT TO:

THE CHRONOMETER 118

is in its housing. Orlov begins winding it as:

ORLOV
You've to wind it thirty-three times.

CULUM
Why do you do it, not someone else?

ORLOV
Navigation's a secret thing. If all knew it then there'd be mutiny after mutiny. But if seamen can't navigate --- they're lost, eh?

Culum is uneasy. He glances at Orlov's misshapen legs:

ORLOV
Don't worry, Culum the Fair. I can kill a man twice my size. Would you like me to teach you how to kill? You couldn't have a better teacher. Except <u>him</u>.

CULUM
No thank you.

ORLOV
One day you'll need such knowledge. Soon. Wise to learn. Did <u>he</u> tell you I had second sight?
(Culum shakes his head)
You've a lot to learn. You want to be Tai-Pan of The Noble House, eh?

CULUM (very uneasily)
Yes - I hope to - when I'm...yes.

ORLOV
There'll be blood on your hands that day.

118 CONT'D (2)

CULUM (shocked)
What do you mean by that?

ORLOV
You've ears. There'll be blood on your hands that day.

CULUM
Who's blood?

ORLOV
Soon you'll need someone you can trust. So long as Stide Orlov's captain of one of your ships, you can trust him.

CULUM (unnerved)
Who's blood?

Orlov locks the housing with finality, smiles to himself, goes aloft. Culum shudders, near sick with fear.

CUT TO:

NOW THE PIRATE FLEET 119

is closer. Even more menacing...

STRUAN - ROBB - CULUM 120

are on the quarterdeck - Orlov apart from them. Culum looks at Orlov disliking him, then more nervously, ahead. Robb is also afraid. Struan feels their fear:

STRUAN (calmly)
I was afraid the first time I went into battle, Culum. Nothing to worry about.

They stare off, astonished...

THE PIRATE FLEET 121

is turning into windward and all their mainsails are coming down. A small fast lorcha detaches and heads for China Cloud...

STRUAN 122

peers through the binoculars bewildered...

HE SEES SCRAGGER 123

a huge black bearded man, earrings and cutlass, on the quarterdeck of the lorcha, peering at him through a telescope. The man laughs uproariously and waves a white flag. Beside him is a Chinese youth, dressed richly...

124

STRUAN

glances at Orlov:

STRUAN
Put a shot across his bow at a hundred yards. If he doesn't stop, blow him out of the water.

ORLOV
Aye aye Tai-Pan.

CULUM
But isn't that a flag of truce?

STRUAN
He might be filled with powder - or be a fire ship, lad. Never let anyone close. He can come aboard alone. Helm alee!

The helmsman shoves the helm over and the ship points neatly into wind.

CUT TO:

SCRAGGER 125

in a small boat rows towards China Cloud, his lorcha at anchor behind him. He sings a sea chanty...

STRUAN ON THE QUARTERDECK 126

smiles grimly...

STRUAN
Cocky bastard.

SCRAGGER 127

ties up neatly and nimbly comes aboard. Elaborate bow:

SCRAGGER
Cap'n Scragger late o'London Town at your service gents. A word in yor ear, Tai-Pan, private like.

STRUAN
Search him!

SCRAGGER
I give me oath. I ain't armed, by God.

Nonetheless he's searched by a mate. Struan cocks a pistol and motions him below. Whistling happily Scragger goes ahead...

DOWN THE GANGWAY 128

followed by Struan...

INTO THE MAIN CABIN 129

where Struan sits. Scragger scratches at the infesting lice:

STRUAN
What's this all about?

SCRAGGER
Whisky afore I starts, eh matey?
Or brandy.

Amused Struan pours some brandy and Scragger drinks it with gusto and helps himself to some more as:

SCRAGGER
You be like what I thort, Tai-Pan.
Me guv, Wu Fang Choi, wants to see
you. 'least Wu Kwok, his chief
admiral an' eldest son, do.

STRUAN
What about?

SCRAGGER
He didn't tell me and I didn't ask.
You've bullion aboard so the rumor is.

STRUAN
J'll see him here. He can come
aboard unarmed, alone.

SCRAGGER (laughs, then:)
You seed the boy aboard me ship? He's
yor hostage, eh? Wu Kwok's son. You
come aboard, armed if thee wish - the
boy stays here.

STRUAN
And the boy turns out to be a coolie's
son dressed up, eh?

SCRAGGER
You've me oath, by God, he's Wu Kwok's
son.

STRUAN
How long were you a convict?

129 CONT'D (2).

SCRAGGER (looks at the marks on his wrists - sourly)
The iron marks, eh? They're still with me after twelve year. Yes transported I was - for hitting a muckraked Bosun. Twenty year term to Botany Bay.

STRUAN
You were lucky you weren't hanged.

SCRAGGER (belches contentedly)
Aye. But I escapes and here I be. Now be you a coming or do we have to board you?

STRUAN
Board me - but first finish your brandy. It'll be the last you taste on this earth.

SCRAGGER
We've a thousand ships against you - that be the truth.

STRUAN
Truth wears many faces. The flag o' truce was for you only - I'll show you what I think of your whole godrotting fleet.

SCRAGGER (laughs derisively)
He thort you'd say that, matey. Oh yus - I forgot. I were to show you this.

His grubby fist contains one of Jin-qua's half coins.

CUT TO:

THE TWO COINS - ON A BLACK LACQUERED TABLE 130

are fitted together by a Chinese hand...

WU KWOK 131

smiles to himself. He is a big, dangerous man. Rich clothes. He sits on many cushions in front of the table. An obsequious slave finishes laying dim sum, tea - kowtows. The main cabin of the war junk is large and dirty. Struan sits opposite Wu Kwok, many guards around them - Scragger picking his broken teeth. Wu Kwok motions to the food, picks up one of the dim sum with chopsticks, offers it to Struan expecting Struan to take it in his fingers. To his astonishment Struan takes it deftly with

131 CONT'D (2)

chopsticks, puts it onto his plate. Immediately picks up an even smaller morsel, offers it to Wu Kwok with the chopsticks. Wu Kwok takes it. But to his veiled fury a tiny fleck drops off onto the table. The guards tense uneasily at his loss of face. Struan calmly eats, then covers his astonishment as:

WU KWOK
Where'd the likes o'you learn to eat like China man, eh, matey?

STRUAN
Where'd you learn to speak English, eh?

WU KWOK
From Scragger n'other gallows bait, over the years. We got fifty or more Limeys n' Americans in our fleets.
(grimly)
You be bigger'n I thort. You be taking many a day to die if you were catched, eh?

STRUAN
My methods're different from yours, Wu Kwok. One moment alive...
(he snaps his fingers)
...the next dead. That's best - for friend, enemy or mad dog.

WU KWOK (after pause)
Why you talk so strange, eh matey?

SCRAGGER
He be toff, like I sayed. Toffs talk different.

STRUAN (picks up the coin)
Where'd you get this?

WU KWOK
One harf coin - one favor, right matey?

STRUAN
Where'd you get this?

WU KWOK
From me Dad. Where'd you think that old highwayman Jin-qua be laying his dirty mits fast on a million in bullion, eh? From his old shipmates o'course.
(laughs)
Pour 'is Honour some grog, Scragger, 'e be needing it.

131
CONT'D
(3)

STRUAN (rocked)
You're partners with Jin-qua?

WU-KWOK
We invest with him occasional, Tai-Pan. Silks, opium, tea. 'course we be keepers of the sea an' we protects his trade, right? An' now we be thy partners, in a manner o'speaking - us'n Noble House. What better invest be there, eh matey?

STRUAN
What's the "favour"?

WU KWOK
There be time. Drink thy grog. Eat - more grub's a coming.

SCRAGGER
He sayed to hang the lad an' blow us apart if he were aboard more'n an hour.

Wu Kwok flicks his eyes back to Struan. He drinks his tea very slowly. The guards watch as the ship heels gently. Struan sips equally slowly, his pistols near at hand:

WU KWOK
You'd hang the boy?

STRUAN
Would you?

WU KWOK
Me Dad says this: Aboard each of yor twenty clippers we puts a seaman - you train 'em like Captains. Next - in year and day we takes delivery of a ship like China Cloud - cannoned and rigged like her, eh, matey - and ten China men sent to Blighty to watch her abuilding. We pays bullion for the ship - whatever she costed. You give bills, we pay.

STRUAN
That's not one favour that's many.

WU KWOK (grating)
Few - many - that be the askt. Has the Tai-Pan no face?

STRUAN (gets up - pockets coins)
I'll hand over the ship to you or your father - in open seas - personally. No one else.

131 CONT'D (4)

WU KWOK
To any I sends.

STRUAN
To Wu Kwok or Wu Fang Choi.

WU KWOK
Why? What muckstink devilment be you planning?

STRUAN
Where's your face, matey?

WU KWOK
All right - but no treachery, by God, or you'll pay.

Struan starts for the door but Scragger stands in his way:

SCRAGGER
Your Holy oath, Tai-Pan?

STRUAN
Jin-qua's already had it, by God.
(he shoves Scragger aside)
I'll put the hostage aboard the lorcha, poor devil.

WU KWOK
Tell you wot, Tai-Pan, keep the lad - hang him, throw him in the sea. Put him aboard us'n and I'll hang him for you.

SCRAGGER
Wot? The boy bain't thy son?

STRUAN
I know the value of the oath of scum.

Struan slams the door behind him. After a violent pause:

WU-KWOK
Scum, eh? I thinks we'd better pay Hong Kong a visit, matey.

CUT TO:

THE HARBOUR OF HONG KONG BY NIGHT 132

is vast. Most of the ships sleep - lantern riding lights. Eight bells - midnight - begin to sound. On the shore a few lanterns around the military cantonment...

AT THE FLAGPOLE - BROCK AND GORTH 133

wait in the semi darkness. Lanterns nearby. Around them are Longstaff and an aide, SINCLAIR, his secretary. The GENERAL. Nagrek Thumb. Skinner and others. The bells continue to sound. Brock looks into the darkness, feeling eyes on them from the Chinese settlement area of Tai Ping Shan:

GORTH (whispers excitedly)
I told you the lorcha went down.

BROCK
I didn't see it.

Brock switches his eyes from the hill...

STRUAN, ROBB AND CULUM 134

come from the shore as the last of the bells sound. Brock tries to read their faces - unsuccessfully:

STRUAN
Evening, gentlemen.

LONGSTAFF (testily)
Surely this could have waited until tomorrow, what?

STRUAN
Our sight drafts are due now, your Excellency. As Captain Superintendent of Trade your presence is formally necessary. It's good of you to come.

LONGSTAFF
Well, get on with it then.

Brock warily takes out a sheaf of papers, hands them to Struan and Robb checks them by lantern light against the duplicates as:

BROCK
Eight hundred and forty thousand pounds. You have a fair voyage, Dirk?

STRUAN
Fair.

ROBB
They all check. Would you sign this please. It's a receipt.

Astonishment amongst the men there. Tension:

134 CONT'D (2)

BROCK (suspiciously)
Eh? Then where's your banker's order, eh?

Struan motions into the darkness...

135

MATCHES

flicker and lanterns are lit. Many. Around a small tent. Orlov beside it. Immediately men pull the tent away. The bullion is there - brick upon brick. A monstrous silence hangs over Hong Kong:

STRUAN
The Noble House decided to pay cash.

Everyone stares at the immensity of wealth, poleaxed. Feet scurry away into the darkness. Brock flushes with rage:

BROCK
God curse you to hell! Gorth - get your bullyboys ashore on the double.

GORTH
Eh?

BROCK
Armed! We'll have every pirate in Asia on our necks in minutes. Get this bullion aboard White Witch.
(pulls out pistols and gives them to Nagrek)
If any comes within five yards blow their heads off.

He stamps over to Longstaff. Hard put to be polite:

BROCK
Begging your pardon, your Excellency. But could I borrow some soldiers, eh?

LONGSTAFF
Soldiers, you say? Is that all real? Cash?

He puts his monacle tighter and walks over towards Struan:

BROCK
Soldiers, your Excellency...

135 CONT'D (2)

LONGSTAFF (impatiently)
General - order some of the men. Why Dirk, my dear fellow. A superb gesture, superb. I didn't know there was that much bullion in all of Asia, what? I knew you'd manage somehow. Would you care to sup tonight?

STRUAN
I can't tonight, Will. Why not come aboard China Cloud tomorrow? For lunch. After the Land Sale.

LONGSTAFF
Thank you - an admirable idea.

Brock comes over, his violence now controlled. Culum tries to hide his fear. A sudden hush - tension on the beach:

BROCK
Admirable - yes. Tomorrow I'll look on you, Dirk, lad, from my knoll.

STRUAN (his face closes)
What?

BROCK (glittering)
The knoll in Happy Valley - I'm buying it. Whatever it cost.

STRUAN (flushes)
It belongs to The Noble House.

BROCK
It belongs to the highest bidder, by God.

He turns away thru the stunned crowd. Struan's face shows his fury. Culum and Robb study him, appalled.

CUT TO:

IN THE MAIN CABIN OF CHINA CLOUD - NIGHT - STRUAN 136

stares thru the stern windows - fog obliterating the shore and the moon. Culum and Robb are sitting at the table, food uneaten:

ROBB
It's a trap! He'll stop bidding suddenly and ruin you.

STRUAN
I repeat: the knoll's the best place in the valley. It belongs to the greatest House. I'm not having that scum looking down on me.

136 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
Father - it's obvious. Everyone knows how you've planned to build there. He'll force you up and up...

His words trail off as he sees his father's face:

ROBB
Dirk - here's your chance. Do to Brock what he'll do to you. Stop bidding suddenly. You can ruin him. At long last.

STRUAN (grates)
Our Great House goes on that knoll, and that's the end to it. It's a matter of 'face'.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
FACE: respect - dignity - prestige - style - presence and a little more. Face is all important in Asia!

CULUM
For the love of God! Don't you see he has you trapped?

STRUAN
Yes. But how do I get out of it with 'face'? Eh? Thru the love of God?

He stalks out. Culum stares after him, strangely.

CUT TO:

ACROSS THE HARBOUR - THE FORE ANCHOR HAUSER OF THE WHITE WITCH 137

dives into the gentle sea. Fog and eerie sounds in the night. Then a hand comes out of the water - wields a razor sharp hatchet and the hauser begins to part...

ON THE QUARTERDECK - NAGREK, OFFICER OF THE WATCH 138

notices nothing untoward...

THE WHITE WITCH 139

drifts gently on the tide shorewards, hauser hanging loose.

CUT TO:

GORTH

140

comes on deck rubbing the sleep out of his eyes:

NAGREK (strangely edged)
All's well, sir. Wind's easterly.

GORTH
Aye, get below. God cursed fog!

Nagrek touches his forelock, walks down the gangway...

141

GORTH

wanders to the gunnel. Because of the fog no sign of movement. The fore hauser hangs limp - the ship drifts slowly...

142

BELOW DECK - ON A GANGWAY - NAGREK

hesitates. Nervously. Then he sneaks silently up the corridor, quickly opens a cabin door and enters...

143

IN THE DARKNESS OF THE CABIN - NAGREK

leans against the closed door, heart racing, sweat beading:

TESS' VOICE
Hist or you'll wake Lillibet.

Nagrek moves silently over to her. Little Lillibet is fast asleep in another bunk across the cabin. Tess' hand comes out to guide him and he sits on the edge of her bunk:

NAGREK (whispers hoarsely)
This is terrible dangerous.

TESS
But you wanted to talk secret.
How else can it be secret?

She sits up in the bunk, lets her hand rest in his, heart throbbing - innocent yet womanly. His hand touches her hair and neck and she shivers. Then he begins to fondle her and 'Don't' she says as he begins to love her:

NAGREK
I want to marry thee, luv.

TESS
Oh yes, oh yes.

CUT TO:

144 ON THE QUARTERDECK - GORTH

drinks from the wine sack hanging on the binacle. He stares at it dully - then his eyes focus as one bell sounds:

GORTH
It's impossible, by God.

SEAMAN
What's amiss, sir?

GORTH
The wind - the wind's west!

The astonished seaman hurries over but Gorth is charging down the deck to the prow. He stares at the broken hauser:

GORTH (appalled)
We're adrift! All hands on deck!
Belay there - let go the aft anchor!

145 SEAMEN OF THE WATCH

rush for the aft anchor but there is a shudder...

146 IN TESS' CABIN - NAGREK AND TESS

are paralysed for a moment. Then Tess gasps...

147 LITTLE LILLIBET

is sitting up in her bunk watching them, wide-eyed...

148 IN BROCK AND LIZA'S CABIN - BROCK

is awake and half out of his bunk as the keel shrieks and the ship grounds heavily, throwing him to the floor...

149 IN TESS' CABIN - NAGREK

tears himself off the bunk and rushes for the door - dressing as he goes - rips the door open. Light floods over Tess glinting on her skin as she and Lillibet stare at each other...

150 NAGREK IN THE CORRIDOR

shoves the cabin door closed and runs for the deck. Brock comes out of his cabin in a blind rush, pistols in his hand - perhaps he saw Nagrek, perhaps not...

151

SAMPANS

are swarming out of the night as the ship heels drunkenly and pirates begin boarding, Scragger amongst them...

152

GORTH

sees them coming and shouts a warning. He grabs a cutlass and decapitates the first man and now the deck watch are fighting for their lives. Nagrek, then Brock come on deck. They begin killing...

153

SCRAGGER

lets out a bellow of rage and blows the face off one man and cuts another across the throat...

154

SEAMEN AND PIRATES

in a melee as other hands swarm from below decks, many are killed. Brock is fighting like an angry bull and Gorth like a devil from hell; Gorth guts one man and slams into another, enjoying the killing...

155

BELOW DECKS - LIZA

ponderously herds the terrified Tess and Lillibet into the main cabin. She slams the door then plants herself outside it, pistols in her hands. She wipes the beading sweat off her lips...

156

ON DECK - SCRAGGER

leads another rush. The crew are being overwhelmed. Gorth charges into the pirates, cutting, hacking then a knife catches him in the side and he goes down. Brock cuts a swathe thru the mob to help Gorth, then wheels, at bay, as Scragger comes in for the kill...

157

NAGREK

sees Brock's plight, recklessly charges over and impales Scragger with a pike. He screams - tries to pull it out - as two pirates rush to his aid but they are cut down. Brock begins wielding his cutlass with two hands, the attack broken with the loss of Scragger...

158

PIRATES

begin to retreat. They rush to the sides in good order and jump. Some reach the sampans, others begin to drown...

BROCK, NAGREK AND OTHERS 159

finish off the remaining pirates. Fire at the sampans which vanish into the fog as silently as they appeared:

BROCK
Them who're cut come aft. Get the pitch boiling. Rest get to the boats and pull us off.
(to Gorth)
Have you coughed blood, lad?

GORTH
No. God curse those devils.

Gorth is standing weakly, blood seeping from the cut in his side. Brock forces his hand away, sighs, relieved:

BROCK
It's clean, lad.
(shouts)
Hurry the pitch, by God!

CUT TO:

THE CAULDRON OF PITCH 160

bubbles. Off screen a low moan...

A YOUNG SEAMAN 161

is lying in the scuppers - bad chest wound, blood seeping from his mouth. Nagrek watches Brock, frightened. Seamen are throwing pirate bodies overboard, the ship once more anchored. Brock puts pitch on Gorth's wound who grimaces - makes no sound. Satisfied he nods to the Doctor LEECH to fix the others:

BROCK
Get the deck cleaned up!

THE YOUNG SEAMAN
Capt'n - wot about me?

BROCK
You're dead, lad. Best make your peace with your Maker.

The seaman begins screaming and cursing. Brock smashes him unconscious, stares at him sadly. Then he hardens:

BROCK
We grounded just after one bell?

GORTH
Aye.

161 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
Then we were cut adrift in your watch, Nagrek. Couldn't drift this distance in one bell, eh?
(Nagrek doesn't answer)
Twenty lashes for all your watch at sun-up. But for you I'd be dead, so I'll think about you.

He stomps below....

162

BELOW DECKS - LIZA

is seated in front of the cabin, the pistols still cocked:

BROCK'S VOICE
All's well, luv. Kids alright?

LIZA
Yes, thank you, Mr. Brock. Sleeping now.
(uncocks pistols)
Was it bad?

BROCK
Passing bad. It's the bullion. There were English amongst the pirates. I killed the leader.

LIZA
I think we better be having a talk.

CUT TO:

163

IN THE HOLD - THE BULLION

glints nicely. Voices approaching and the flicker of lanterns:

GORTH'S VOICE
There, I told you. Door's still locked. None of those muck-ricked pirates got below.

NAGREK'S VOICE
That's right, Mr. Brock.

BROCK'S VOICE
We're checking anyway.

Sound of door being unchained. The door opens and Brock enters with the lantern. Gorth and Nagrek follow and they peer into the shadows. Brock grimly bolts the door:

BROCK
Seems that Nagrek's been touching your sister, Gorth.

163
CONT'D
(2)

NAGREK (bursts out)
I didn't -- I didn't, by God.

Gorth's rage floods. Brock reaches for a cat o'nine tails that hangs on a bulkhead:

BROCK
Seem he went to her cabin tonight while she sleeped and woke her up...

NAGREK
I didn't touch her I didn't harm her, by God. She askt me - this afternoon - she askt me to see her.

BROCK
So you was in her cabin!

Gorth lunges for Nagrek who rushes for the door - gasps as the pitch comes away from his side. Brock begins stalking Nagrek:

BROCK
You're a dead man, Nagrek.

NAGREK
I swear to God I didn't touch her, I ---

The cat snakes out - a deliberate near miss:

BROCK
You put your stinking hands on her!

NAGREK
Please, Mister Brock -- don't -- There were no harm done I swear it -- I'm sorry -- doan' please -- I only touched her, nothing more.

Brock stops abruptly - his breathing loud. Nagrek is petrified. The timbers creak:

BROCK
You heared, Gorth? It <u>is</u> true.

Both men spring at Nagrek and the silver cascades but Brock is faster and he smashes Nagrek to the ground - then tears Gorth off him as he tries to stamp him into the deck:

BROCK (he shoves Gorth aside, gets his breath with an effort)
Wait!

GORTH
But that scum said ---

163 CONT'D (3)

BROCK (overriding him)
I want him awake. I want him to know.
(catching his breath)
Her Ma says Tess was afraid to tell, at first, poor lass. But she's still a Virgin, praise be to God.

He takes out a small knife as Nagrek begins to come around, viciously cuts the clothes off him...

164

GORTH

winces. A gurgling howl of pain from Nagrek. Brock straightens. And then he picks up the cat o'nine tails.

CUT TO:

165

AT THE LAND SALE IN HAPPY VALLEY - DAY - COOPER

shakes his head sadly in the crowd:

COOPER
Very bad joss, Mr. Brock. We heard Nagrek died?

BROCK (shortly)
Yus. Buried him with full honours at sun-up, poor lad. Along with the others. 'cuse me, Mr. Cooper.

He walks off, heading for Struan - who is talking to Gordon Chen - on the far side of the valley. Around them is the excited hustle and bustle of the pre-land sale - no women present. Longstaff and all the others there; Gorth surrounded by his admirers; Culum beside the auctioneer, HENRY HARDY HIBBS, a tiny grubby little man. Culum seems very strange, and he watches Struan and Gordon Chen nervously...

166

GORDON CHEN

gasps incredulously:

GORDON CHEN
Twenty thousand dollars, Mr. Struan?

STRUAN
Yes. But this is a secret - between you and me only. You take one fourth of the profit, I take three fourths.

166 CONT'D (2)

GORDON CHEN (collecting himself)
That would be very fair, sir. But if I was to have two thirds and you one third it would help me to make you considerably more profit.

STRUAN
I expect the profit to be considerable. We'll split, equally. You'll keep books and account monthly. Agreed?

GORDON CHEN
Thank you sir - I don't know what to say.

CULUM'S VOICE
Father.

Struan glances around, his eyes narrow. Gordon Chen waits. Culum's face is strange and set. All three are conscious of the stares of the crowds:

STRUAN
Hello, laddie. This is Gordon Chen. My son, Culum.

GORDON CHEN
I'm honoured to meet you, sir.

STRUAN
Gordon's your half brother, Culum.

Gordon Chen stares dumbfounded at Struan:

CULUM (to Struan's surprise)
Yes, I know.
(he puts out his hand)
How old are you, Gordon?

GORDON (weakly shakes hands)
Twenty-one, sir.

CULUM
Half brothers should call each other by their Christian names shouldn't they? We must get to know each other better. Sorry to interrupt you...

He would have left then but there are tears in Gordon Chen's eyes as he looks up at Struan:

GORDON CHEN
Thank you Mr. Struan. I've waited all my life - thank you, thank you.

166
CONT'D
(3)

STRUAN
Most people call me Tai-Pan, lad.

Gordon Chen leaves weakly. Culum is over-strange - very nervous:

CULUM
I wanted to meet him today - publicly. To give you 'face'.

STRUAN
That was thoughtful of you. Why did you ask his age?

CULUM (bitterly)
He's the same age as me, so his mother was....concurrent....with mine. Wasn't she?

STRUAN
Concurrent would be one word.

CULUM
Adultery would be another.

STRUAN
One of the truths of this world is that adultery's as normal as death and sunrise.

CULUM
Not according to the commandments of God.
(beat)
Is it true also that you gave Gordon's mother to your compradore?

STRUAN (grim amusement)
I sold her to him, lad. That gave her lots of face and him. She's been his third wife for seventeen years. Very happily.
(brittle)
Aunt Sarah has her facts mixed.

He suddenly sees Brock approaching and his eyes slit. Culum goes even a little greyer. A hush on the beach:

BROCK
Morning Dirk.

STRUAN
Morning.

166 CONT'D (4)

BROCK
The best marine lots are 17 and 18, 21, 45, 47, 53-4. Pick any two. I do likewise. I don't bid on yours - you likewise. No point in wasting time.

STRUAN
53 and 54.

167

BROCK
17 and 18.

CULUM

looks from man to man - dying inside.

CUT TO:

168

THE GAVEL

comes down with a slam. An electric hush:

HENRY HARDY HIBBS
Lot 158 sold to Cooper and Company!
(he smiles toothlessly)
Well that's it, gents. Them wot has bought, step right up and half cash now - balance in thirty days. Receipts from the Deputy Colonial Secretary.

169

STRUAN

breaks the astonished silence:

STRUAN
The sale's not complete yet!

BROCK
Yes, by God!

HIBBS (cautiously)
Eh?

STRUAN
What about the knoll?

HIBBS (preparing to run)
Wot knoll, yor Honours?

169 CONT'D (2)

Struan angrily shoulders his way thru the stunned crowd:

STRUAN
That knoll!

HIBBS
It ain't on the list, Guv.
Nuffink to do with me!
(to Culum)
Is it yor Honour?

Culum turns a little greyer under Struan's furious eyes:

CULUM
The - the knoll was purchased this morning.

STRUAN
By whom?

CULUM
By me. For - for a church. One pound a year --- for a Church.

STRUAN
You took my knoll?

CULUM
For - for a Church. His Excellency signed the deed - this morning.

LONGSTAFF (appalled)
But I thought it was your idea, Dirk. Good God! I would never have approved if I'd known.

STRUAN (inflexibly at Culum)
You knew I wanted that land?

CULUM
Yes. But -- but now -- now it -- belongs to - to the House of God.

STRUAN
Then you've dared to cross me!

Culum winces, waiting for the blow. Even Brock is appalled by the rage that seems to pour out of Struan. A breathless silence. Then, with an enormous effort Struan unbunches his fists and walks off. A vast silence. Abruptly Brock's roar of laughter shatters it and everyone flinches:

LONGSTAFF
Shut up - shut up!

169 CONT'D (3)

BROCK
Aye - that I will, your Excellency!
(almost compassionately)
Culum, you don't know that devil like I do - best watch your back.

He turns away. The men on the beach break into small groups, chattering excitedly. Robb hurries up, Culum numb, near fainting:

ROBB
For the love of God, why didn't you ask him first?

Culum shrugs helplessly. Robb chases after Struan. Gorth studies Culum strangely, as Brock joins him...

STRUAN 170

is walking out of Happy Valley:

ROBB
Dirk --- wait! Dirk!

Struan stops momentarily, consumed with rage:

STRUAN
Tell him I'll see him on <u>his</u> knoll at dawn.

ROBB
But Dirk - don't you see - the poor lad was only trying to help...

STRUAN (overriding him)
Tell him to come alone.

ROBB
But listen a minute...

STRUAN
TELL HIM TO COME ALONE!

CUT TO:

ON THE KNOLL - AT DAWN - STRUAN'S RIGHT HAND 171

is near his knife. Culum is climbing onto the knoll, his face stark. Some people below, watching but pretending not to watch. The fleet nicely at anchor...

STRUAN 172

wears a shirt and trousers and boots - a small rucksack at his feet. A huge SILENCE:

172 CONT'D (2)

CULUM (rasps out)
I'm not afraid of you. There're laws against murder. You can kill me but you'll hand for it.

STRUAN
You think I'd kill you?

CULUM (flooding)
If I got in your way and I got in your way. You used to be God to me but since I've come here I know you for what you are - killer, murderer, pirate, smuggler, adulterer. You buy and sell people - you've sired bastards and your name stinks in the nostrils of decent people.

STRUAN (picks up the rucksack)
Come on. I want you in private.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
There're eyes watching us. I can feel them. We're going up there.

He points to a nearby mountain:

CULUM
No!

Struan looks at him, begins the easy climb. Culum shudders, near panic. Then reluctantly follows, climbing badly.

CUT TO:

ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE - CULUM 173

is slipping, falling and getting up. Rocks and little scrub. The climb is not that steep but his fear and tiredness swamp him. He stops a moment to catch his breath - then begins climbing again.

CUT TO:

NEAR THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN - CULUM 174

is almost dropping with fatigue. The panorama of the harbour and Kowloon - the mainland peninsula across the bay is vast and beautiful below. He climbs the last few feet and comes out onto the crest of the mountain, panting. Then his mouth drops open and gapes...

is calmly offering him a glass of wine. A picnic is spread out in the lee of the wind. Cold chicken - bread - a bottle of wine on a tablecloth:

STRUAN (gently)
Here lad. You must be thirsty.
Sit down. It's a strong climb.
I'm tired myself.

Culum gulps the wine, slumps down on the ground helplessly:

CULUM
One moment you're the Devil ---
the next --- I don't understand you.

STRUAN
Eat - you must be starving.

CULUM
The knoll - it had to be done - it
was the only way to save you --
you forced it. You did!

STRUAN (mildly)
Of course. I'm very, very proud of you.
That took brains, shrewdness, cunning
and guts.

CULUM (incredulously)
You - you wanted me to do what I did?

STRUAN
Certainly.

CULUM
Then -- then your anger, it was all
pretended?

STRUAN
Obviously. If Brock suspected I'd
suggested it to you we'd've lost face
forever.

CULUM (jumps up furiously)
You'd put me into nightmares for
your godrotting face?

STRUAN (even more mildly)
Not mine, laddie. Yours.

175 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
You're the Devil - devil incarnate. By the Lord God I'll ----

STRUAN (grabs him, but gently)
Before you say something you may regret you'll listen! You decided, eh? Now you're a man - now you're Culum Struan - the man who crossed the Tai-Pan! You've gained more face in one day than you could get in twenty years.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
Now you're Culum the strong, Culum the clever, Culum the shrewd, Culum the dangerous. They'll start fawning on you: Brock, Gorth, Cooper - the rest. They'll hope you'll hate me so much you'll want to destroy me.
(Culum stares blankly)
So we'll play them at their game. Whenever we meet in public - we pretend hostility. Controlled hatred. From now on.

CULUM
Hatred?

STRUAN
Yes. They'll feed you lies - half truths. Hoping to use you against me - to destroy both of us. This way you'll be protected.

Culum looks at him - almost as though he's seeing a stranger:

CULUM
I'll have nothing to do with it.

STRUAN (laughs)
Ah laddie, you're so young - I envy you your years ahead.
(quietly)
How do you think you lead men, eh? By the strength of your arm only? No. But by your brain. By face. And by magic.

Culum stares at him a long time. Then he sits down and picks up a piece of chicken, lost in thought:

CULUM
Why did you come up here?

175 CONT'D (3)

STRUAN
To tire you so I could talk to you. And to show you that though the view is good from the knoll - from here it's grand.

CULUM
Uncle Robb. He's not to know about our 'enmity'?

STRUAN
That's your decision.

CULUM
What about the bullion? Brock'll be pirated and pirated.

STRUAN (smiles)
You'll discount half for him, and give him our paper on London, <u>without</u> my permission - at the fair fee of 10,000 pounds. That money <u>you</u> decide decide pays for the Church. <u>Your</u> gift to Hong Kong.

CULUM
Wu Kwok's terms - they put our ships in a noose, don't they?

STRUAN
To teach those twenty 'Captains' first they must learn English, eh? If we can talk to them - why can't we convert them, eh? To our side. It's a good gamble.

CULUM
And the clipper?

STRUAN
I'll hand her over - then sink her. I've a sea battle in a year and a day, that's all.

CULUM (after pause - curiously)
Everything planned. Simple. Very simple.

Struan studies him. Then:

STRUAN
Have you ever had a mistress?

175
CONT'D
(4)

CULUM (flushes)
No.

STRUAN
There are houses in Macao - Oriental and European - most are diseased - very few are safe. So the custom here is to have a girl all to yourself. You keep her, pay her bills and then, when you tire of her, you give her some money and dismiss her.

CULUM
Isn't that pretty callous?

STRUAN
Yes - if it's done without face. The little money on our standards you give is more than enough to provide her with a fine dowry. You buy the girl through a matchmaker.

CULUM
Isn't that slavery? Of the worst kind?

STRUAN
If your idea is to buy a slave. And you treat her like one. I'll arrange it for you if you wish.

CULUM
Thank you but - well, it's not necessary.

STRUAN
Sex is quite a normal appetite, Culum, and nothing to be ashamed of. But never, never go to a house drunk or unprotected.

CULUM
You bought Gordon's mother?

STRUAN
Yes. Jin-qua was the middle man.

CULUM
You've a mistress now?

STRUAN
Of course.

CULUM
How much did you pay for her?

175
CONT'D
(5)

STRUAN
I'd say that was none of your business.

CULUM (reddens)
Sorry - I didn't mean to be rude. I meant how much does a girl cost? To buy?

STRUAN
That depends on your taste. You can afford the best.
(smiles)
If you like, ask Robb - or Jeff Cooper - you can trust them. And you can trust me, Culum. Completely. So long as you never, with calculation, go against The Noble House.

Struan looks back at the emptiness of Happy Valley:

STRUAN
I'm sailing for Macao on the tide.

CULUM
Why?

STRUAN
To give you breathing space - and time to practice our 'enmity'. We start building at once. Start the church tomorrow. Build my cottage. Robb has the plans. It's to be up in three weeks, the garden planted and a ten foot wall around it.

CULUM
That's impossible!

STRUAN
Tell Robb. Put a thousand coolies on it if necessary. Furnished - landscaped - as the plan says.
(he studies the valley. Then:)
You're to do everything, while I'm away. You and Robb.

CULUM (after pause)
Yes. Tai-Pan.

Not 'father', never again father. Struan looks at him deeply, knowing. But content...

STRUAN AND CULUM 176

look at each other on the mountain top, a gulf between them - the wind tugging them. CAMERA wanders away down into the Valley. Sounds of building. And now...

HAPPY VALLEY 177

is partially built under a gentle sun. Coolies swarming everywhere, sawing, building, bricklaying. The shells of Struan and Brock's 'factories' dominate either end of the foreshore. Two wharfs already built. Many part-built houses of various sizes. A quarter completed Church on the knoll. And there, far below, is Struan's cottage. Large, neat, walled, gardened.

CUT TO:

AT THE FORESHORE IN HAPPY VALLEY - STRUAN 178

is studying the partially built factory with Robb. Nearby is the large tent that serves as their temporary "office" quarters. Culum comes around the building with Orlov - his face hardens seeing Struan. Many others, walking Happy Valley, notice this - Skinner amongst them:

STRUAN
Progress's excellent, Robb.

ROBB
Costs are soaring - coolies are getting twice as much as when we started.

CULUM
You wanted to see me?

STRUAN (sharply)
It shouldn't be necessary for the senior partner to send for the junior partner. You should have been here this morning - and met me last night.

ROBB (uneasily)
It's - well, Dirk, you were quite late and...

STRUAN
That's no excuse, Robb. You were there. Orlov was there.

CULUM
I'll meet your boat in future. Have you finished with me?

STRUAN
For the moment.

Culum stalks off. Very convincingly. Struan glares at him: 178 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Where was he?

ORLOV
Breakfasting with the American, Cooper.

ROBB
Can't you forgive him, Dirk?

STRUAN
Double our labour force, Robb. Today.

He smiles, friendly, goes into the tent...

IN THE TENT - GORDON CHEN 179

gets up from his high desk with some ledgers and heads for Struan who sits at his dominating desk. Around are many clerks - Portuguese and Eurasian - with quills and ledgers at desks. De Vargas, Chief Clerk, a white-haired Portuguese is prominent:

GORDON CHEN
Welcome back Tai-Pan. Did you have a pleasant voyage?

STRUAN
Yes, thank you, Gordon. Macao's good at this time of the year.

GORDON CHEN
These are for your signature, Tai-Pan. Bills of Lading for teas.
(drops his voice)
Could I see you privately for a moment?

STRUAN
Of course. Come along - I want to look at the factory.

He leads the way out...

ON THE FORESHORE STRUAN 180

walks along briskly - Gordon Chen beside him - along the factory. Behind them the panorama of Happy Valley, buzzing with activity. As they walk:

180
CONT'D
(2)

GORDON CHEN
Here are the accounts of the private venture.
(hands him a scroll)
I'm happy to report that based on an initial investment of four thousand eight hundred and sixteen dolla we've made a net profit of three thousand nine hundred and fourteen dolla ten cents.

STRUAN (slightly staggered)
That's quite a profit for one month's trading.

Gordon Chen is more than a little pleased with himself - but he plays it Asian style:

GORDON CHEN
I hope to improve next month Tai-Pan. Our land investments promise to be most profitable.

STRUAN
But you didn't buy any land.

GORDON CHEN
I've, er, been buying lots on the Tai-ping Shan hill. We, er, own all of it now. And considerable acreage in Aberdeen and Deepwater Bay.

STRUAN
But none of that land's been put on sale!

GORDON CHEN (benign)
These are 'ancient rights', Tai-Pan. Belonging to the fishing village the other side of the island. I've bought all their 'rights'. We have official deeds.

STRUAN
Then they're not legal. All the land belongs to the Queen.

GORDON CHEN
Absolutely, Tai-Pan. But of course some provision had to be made for the poor villagers. The, er, Elders approached His Excellency who was most magnanimous, sir. His official chop's on every one of our deeds.

Struan sighs, lights a cheroot, as Gordon Chen cheerfully continues:

180 CONT'D (3)

GORDON CHEN
Naturally, all our holdings are in the names of 'appointees'. I have been most circumspect.

STRUAN
Of course. And how did "we"make the profit - almost fifty per cent for one month?

GORDON CHEN
Banking mostly. And rents of course. We also own a controlling interest in eight laundries, three restaurants, one hundred sedan chairs, ninety-four street vendors, nine sampans, fourteen fishing junks, eight net makers, fifteen clothes makers -- we supply His Excellency's shirts now --- and three jewellers. As soon as Queen's Town is populated, we'll get the night soil collection contract which I've already sold in part to the farmers in Kowloon and ----

STRUAN
I'd say there was quite a future for you, Gordon. Perhaps you'd better leave The Noble House so you can concentrate on making one of your own.

GORDON CHEN (appalled)
Oh no, Tai-Pan, that would never do. Be very bad for "face". I was going to suggest perhaps I could be made assistant compradore --- I'm sure Chen Sheng would agree.

STRUAN
Has he already agreed how much squeeze you're to pay for the post?

GORDON CHEN
Oh yes. It's most reasonable, Tai-Pan. I'll guarantee a profit for the House.

STRUAN
I'm sure you will!

A signal cannon. They glance seawards...

A STRANGE FOUR MASTED BRIGANTINE 181

is sailing thru the neck into the harbour. Signal cannons and answering broadsides from the ship. Then a flag breaks out at the forepeak....

STRUAN 182

takes out his binoculars...

THRU THE BINOCULARS HE SEES THE FLAG 183

of the Tsar of all the Russias. Beside it a Royal Standard...

STRUAN 184

frowns - astonished - Gordon Chen forgotten.

CUT TO:

THE DOOR OF THE MAIN CABIN ABOARD HMS VENGEANCE 185

is opened by Glessing, sweating in dress uniform:

GLESSING
Your Excellency, may I present His Highness Archduke Alexi Zergeyev.

Zergeyev is very handsome. Dress sword. A horseman, hunter and no man to quarrel with. His eyes study Longstaff and Struan - particularly Struan - as Glessing exits:

ZERGEYEV
I'm honoured, your Excellency.

LONGSTAFF (in Russian)
Please sit down, your Highness, you're very welcome. Did you have a good voyage?

ZERGEYEV (in Russian)
Yes thank you. I had hoped that you would be the son of Sir Robert.

LONGSTAFF (in English - to Struan)
I'm afraid my Russian is rusty, what? I was at school in St. Petersburg the years my father was at the Tsar's Court. May I introduce Mr. Dirk Struan, your Highness?

Instant recognition of the name, mostly concealed. A steward with chilled champagne comes in and offers glasses as:

ZERGEYEV
My pleasure, Mr. Struan.

STRUAN
You have me at a disadvantage, your Highness. I get the impression you know about me - but I don't know about you.

185
CONT'D
(2)

ZERGEYEV (laughs)
The reputation of the Tai-Pan of The Noble House has reached St. Petersburg. I look forward to telling you about myself - if it would interest you.

LONGSTAFF (lifts glass)
To a safe journey home.
(then, blandly)
I'm sorry we have no caviar.

ZERGEYEV
I would be delighted to send you some from my ship.

LONGSTAFF (blandly)
This is your first port of call from St. Petersburg?

ZERGEYEV
Yes. I was delighted to hear your war with China was solved with almost no loss of life. The Tsar will be very pleased.

LONGSTAFF
A mere incident, your Highness, a misunderstanding. Fortunately the Emperor of China and Her Majesty's Government are in perfect accord. Of course we have had well over a hundred years of experience in China. And Asia is within Her Britannic Majesty's exclusive sphere of influence.

ZERGEYEV
Of course. I'm glad that Russia and England are hereditary allies. With similar interests.

LONGSTAFF
Is this your first voyage to Asia?

ZERGEYEV
Yes. And most exciting. I'm on an unofficial visit to our American possessions in Alaska.

A careful, covered, amused moment between Longstaff and Struan. Then:

LONGSTAFF
Perhaps you'd honour me by having dinner, tonight, your Highness. Dirk, you'll join us of course.

185 CONT'D (3)

STRUAN
Why not have a reception for the Archduke, your Excellency? Here, aboard the flagship. Tonight.

LONGSTAFF
But my dear fellow that hardly gives time to arrange a suitable dinner - let alone a reception.

STRUAN
The Noble House'd be glad to provide a modest supper, your Excellency.

CUT TO:

THAT NIGHT - A MAMMOTH KITCHEN 186

is set up under lantern light on the foreshore. CAMERA pulls away as CHEN SHENG, compradore of The Noble House - with Gordon Chen deferentially in tow - passes. Curious crowds of Chinese watching. Many sampans waiting in line with uniformed servants ready to take the food out to the flagship. Chickens are being plucked, others decapitated, others disjointed; sides of beef twist over spits; pigs are being cleaned in huge boiling vats; a thousand pies being filled with fruit or stew or jam; a mountain of loaves; butter and fresh fruit and sweetmeats. Chen Sheng supervises this controlled chaos as he walks ponderously. CAMERA moves to see the flagship. Lanterns and soft music and longboats arriving with guests - men and women in their best dresses...

AT THE MAIN GANGWAY ABOARD HMS VENGEANCE - BROCK 187

gets out of his longboat - helps Liza and Tess (half seen and hardly noticed). Gorth follows. All in their best clothes, Brock wearing a tightly waisted purple and green frock coat - Liza a decollete maroon horror with a matching feathered headdress. The Main Deck is lanterned and dressed with awnings and very attractive and romantic - officers of the Navy and Army, traders in their best, ladies vying with one another - and any eligible girl surrounded with twenty suitors. A Navy band plays a minuet. Hundreds of Chinese waiters in livery of The Noble House pad back and forth with glasses of champagne and other drinks. Longstaff and Zergeyev are near the gangway.and guests are introduced as they arrive. Struan, Culum and Robb nearby - Sarah seated heavily, very near her time, with other matrons. DE VARGAS, Chief Clerk of The Noble House, his wife and daughter, MANOELITA - flashing-eyed, eighteen, green dress decollete, and very bedible - are moving away from Zergeyev.

DE VARGAS
'evening, Tai-Pan. May I present my wife - and eldest daughter, Manoelita.

She curtseys - her breasts sway interestingly. Struan bows. More than a little impressed:

187 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
May I introduce my son Culum, Senhora and Senhorita De Vargas.

Culum bows and she curtseys - but her eyes are on Struan as she leaves. Struan watches her go. Many eyes on her...

ROBB (smiles)
Well, you are the most eligible male in Asia.

STRUAN
Get on with you, Robb.

CULUM 188

takes his eyes off her, glances at his father. Jealously there, and a little anger. Skinner and others are watching them without watching them. Culum looks back at Manoelita. She is much woman. She flutters her fan coquettishly - maybe at him - maybe at Struan. Culum preens himself...

BROCK 189

leads the way from the receiving line. A momentary crush of guests and he has to stop beside Struan:

STRUAN
'evening. Mrs. Brock - Tess.

BROCK
'evening.

STRUAN
I don't believe you've met my son, Culum: Mrs. Brock and Miss Tess Brock.

CULUM 190

pulls his eyes off Manoelita, turns. And falls in love...

TESS 191

is curtseying. Almost unrecognisable - hair up. Obviously her first 'gown'. Tiny waist and lovely dress and sweetly decollete. She looks up at Culum - and falls in love. Suddenly strangely quiet, their voices bell-like:

CULUM
I'm honoured. May I have the first dance?

TESS
Thank you - I'd be honoured. 191 CONT'D (2)

They stand in awe of each other...

THE CHATTER LEVEL FLOODS BACK AS BROCK 192

leads the way to the other side of the main deck. Liza is delighted with her entrance. Tess glances back at Culum over her fan - aping the older girls...

CULUM 193

is hypnotised. He smiles back - obviously - and her fan flutters...

STRUAN 194

bows to another group - glances at Culum. Then across the room. TESS! His mind races at the implications...

LONGSTAFF 195

comes up with Zergeyev - two liveried bodyguard servants a discreet distance away...

LONGSTAFF
Pleasant night, what?

ZERGEYEV
Very pleasant, Mr. Struan.

STRUAN
Perhaps you'd like to lead the first dance, your Highness.

ZERGEYEV
Unfortunately I don't know any of the ladies.

STRUAN (smiles)
That's easily remedied. Choose.

ZERGEYEV (deftly)
That would be impolite. Perhaps you'd be kind enough to choose a lady who would honor me.

STRUAN
And get <u>my</u> eyes scratched out?

He hesitates: Manoelita, very pretty, Mary a good choice. He walks across the deck... 195 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
With your permission Tyler, perhaps Tess could lead the first dance with our guest?

BROCK 196

is paralysed, Liza and Tess, near fainting, as an astonished rustle goes thru the ship. Culum doesn't know whether to be glad or sorry...

COOPER 197

as rocked as the others, whispers to Glessing:

COOPER
Why should he choose her? Is he making peace with Brock?

GLESSING
Perhaps he hopes she'll fall down and break her leg! Or dance like a cow!

STRUAN 198

leads Tess back across the deck, all eyes on them, whispers:

STRUAN
Can you waltz, lassie?

She nods numbly, terrified. Then she sees Culum watching her. His smile and nod of encouragement pushes away her terror:

STRUAN
May I present Miss Tess Brock?---
His Highness Archduke Alexi Zergeyev.

An electric moment as they all watch Tess. She curtseys sweetly and he kisses her hand gallantly. Everyone sighs with relief and applauds. Brock, Liza and Gorth are wet with sweat:

TESS
Did you have a pleasant voyage, your Highness?

ZERGEYEV (gravely)
Delightful Miss Brock.

Tess is in control now, supremely conscious of all the eyes on her - and Culum's pride...

STRUAN 199

signals the band. They strike up the waltz and Zergeyev leads Tess onto the centre of the deck. They dance well together. Manoelita watches, really hoping she'll break a leg, then is led out by Longstaff. She dances exquisitely. Struan bows before Liza, begins dancing with her, to more astonished stares. Gorth watches suspiciously. Brock is almost bursting with pride watching Tess. The music changes and...

CUT TO:

ANOTHER DANCE 200

progresses without cessation. Culum is dancing with Tess now and both are oblivious of the world. Zergeyev is chatting with Longstaff - Struan dances with Manoelita, all eyes on them.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER DANCE 201

without cessation of music. Again Culum and Tess. Zergeyev surrounded. Brock is watching the dancers with Gorth. Cooper with Manoelita. Struan drinking with Longstaff - Robb, ill at ease beside Sarah...

ROBB 202

stands wearily beside Sarah who looks and feels dreadful:

ROBB
Can I get you anything?

SARAH (vicious)
Yes - a boat home. Have you booked it yet?

ROBB
No.

SARAH
I won't change my mind.
(shudders)
In a month, God willing, I'll still be alive and well enough to leave this cursed island.

ROBB
It'll be dangerous for you and the baby to travel so soon.

SARAH
Then you'd better escort us home.

ROBB
I can't. You know that!

202 CONT'D (2)

SARAH
You've more important things to do, haven't you? Perhaps you've another heathen whore ready and waiting for you again.

ROBB
For God's sake! That was over years ago. I promised that...

SARAH (slamming into him)
Dirk's got one on the island already. Why should you be different?

ROBB
Has he?

SARAH
Hasn't he?

CUT TO:

LONGSTAFF AND STRUAN 203

are by the quarterdeck gunnel:

LONGSTAFF (quietly)
Why should a very important Russian arrive here suddenly, what?

STRUAN
His presence's hardly a coincidence. Is Russia going to interfere in Asia now?

LONGSTAFF
Her expansion into Europe's blocked - for the present, what? There's no Great Land Power between Moscow and the Pacific.

STRUAN
Except China.

LONGSTAFF
And we know China's weak against a modern force.

STRUAN
A weak China could be a great asset to Russia - perhaps even vital.

LONGSTAFF
Because then she swallows Asia!

203 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
And India - then China herself.

LONGSTAFF (a little smile)
I agree we should inform Her Majesty's Government at once. I already sent a frigate.

STRUAN (smiles)
Very wise, Will. Very wise.

CUT TO:

GORTH 204

is watching Culum and Tess dancing. Brock quaffs his tankard:

GORTH
Culum's proper taken with our Tess. This's the fourth dance - and that afore supper.

BROCK
I've been counting too. It'll be his last.

GORTH (deliberately)
A match between those two'd be right good for us'n.

BROCK (reddens)
Are you sick in your head?

GORTH
Struan'll go home soon. For good.

BROCK
Dirk'll never leave. Never.

GORTH (spits neatly)
Yes he will - to Parliament.
(thinly)
Like you will Dad, one day, eh? Soon, eh? For good.

BROCK
Dirk'll never go.

GORTH
He'll go. With that devil gone - who's Tai-Pan, eh? Robb. Then Culum.

He walks off. Brock turns his violent eyes back to Tess. The beauty of her swamps him - that and her smile at him. He watches as she looks back at Culum - both of them so happy, so open. He drinks thoughtfully as the music ends.

CUT TO:

A HUNDRED LIVERIED CHINESE SERVANTS 205

come up the gangway carrying silver trays of foods. Boars heads with candles in their mouths - sheep - sides of beef - chickens - pies of all types. Gargantuan amounts. Fruits and sweetmeats. All cooked beautifully and presented lavishly to the eye...

ZERGEYEV 206

shakes his head, surrounded by ladies:

ZERGEYEV
I haven't seen so much food in my life.

MANOELITA
La, your Highness, this is merely ordinary for The Noble House.

They laugh.

CUT TO:

ON THE FORESHORE - GORDON CHEN 207

is watching the flagship - muted voices and laughter waft on the breeze - with longing. A slight noise and he glances up startled. Orlov is watching him:

ORLOV (strangely)
Evening - tai-Pan.

GORDON CHEN (shocked)
Why do you call me that?

A curious pause, then Orlov shrugs. Gets into a longboat.

CUT TO:

GORTH 208

is walking thru the crowded tables on the first gundeck, after dinner - cigars and port. Men only - the ladies are moving now, en masse, to the curtained area on the main deck. Culum is to one side, lost in happy thought looking out of a gun hatch:

GORTH
'evening. A word in your ear?

CULUM (startled)
Yes - yes of course.

208
CONT'D
(2)

GORTH
It's about your Dad and mine. They're enemies and that's a fact. Even so there's no reason for us to be enemies - China's big enough for both of us and I'm mortal sick with those two acting stupid - like over the knoll. You saved both their 'faces' I'm thinking.
(plays with a salt cellar)
Let's start fair - you and me, eh? Open. Mayhaps we can be friends - who knows? But let's give it a try - eh?

CULUM (astonished)
I never expected - well that you'd have an - open mind.

GORTH
Why not, eh - my whole point - why should I hate you, eh?

CULUM
No reason - I wouldn't harm you.

GORTH
It won't be easy, Culum. We're from different schools you'n me. Mine was a ship, I was afore the mast when I was ten - so you'll have to go easy with my manners and talk. But I'm the best seaman in these waters - 'cepting my Dad and that bugger Orlov.

CULUM
Is he good?

GORTH (shudders, throws salt over his shoulder)
That bastard was sired by a shark and whelped by a mermaid. He gives me the creeps.

CULUM
Me too.

Gorth glances around. Struan is going up the gangway with Zergeyev. Brock talking with some traders. Longstaff holding forth with others:

GORTH
I'm not saying your Dad's right and mine's wrong. All I'm saying is we've our own lives to lead, as best we can.

208 CONT'D (3)

CULUM
I agree. Yes, I agree.

GORTH
Our Dads won't be liking it if we're friends, nohow.

CULUM
Yes. I know.

GORTH
I'll be straight with you. It was Tess wot sayed tonight was a good time to talk privvy with you. Weren't my idea first off. But I'm glad I've said it.

CULUM
Your sister, uh, Miss Brock's - well - I'm honoured to know her.

GORTH
She's my step-sister - not my real sister. My...my Ma - she died birthing me.
(sticks out his hand)
What do you say? Let's give it a go, eh?

Culum shakes the hand gladly. They toast each other.

CUT TO:

STRUAN AND ZERGEYEV 209

stroll on the quarterdeck - the sea gentle:

ZERGEYEV
You should see Mother Russia, Mr. Struan. The earth is rich and filled with life. Yet we laid waste fifteen hundred miles to contain devil Bonaparte.
(smiles)
You belong to the sea - I to the land. I bequeath you the sea.

Zergeyev says something in Russian. One of his bodyguard servants appears instantly, offers cheroots and a light on one knee. Zergeyev hardly notices the man. Struan firmly holds the man's wrist and pulls him up - then takes the light:

STRUAN
Thank you.

Zergeyev speaks to the man in Russian and the man bows then steps back to his guard position:

209 CONT'D (2)

ZERGEYEV
I told him in future to offer fire here according to <u>your</u> customs.
(after pause)
I would like to be your friend. We could be of great service to each other.

STRUAN
What do you want from Asia?

ZERGEYEV
I could perhaps see that The Noble House was granted the exclusive tea import license for all the Russias. And, outward bound, all fur exports.

Struan covers his awe at the enormous proposal. A waiter offers glasses of port. Struan shakes his head and the man pads away:

STRUAN
In return for what? Your Highness.

ZERGEYEV
Friendship.

STRUAN
That covers a multitude of meanings.

The ladies begin to come back. Manoelita amongst them. Both of them notice her - with appreciation. She smiles back also with appreciation. Zergeyev turns back to Struan:

ZERGEYEV
One meaning --- though there are many ways a friend can help a friend. Perhaps we could talk, another time.

STRUAN
In Asia time varies greatly.

ZERGEYEV
Time waits for no man, Mr. Struan. Even in Asia.
(turns back to watch the girls. Sighs.)
Very bedible.

STRUAN
Quite.

They laugh together. Walk over to her.

CUT TO:

AT DAWN - MAY-MAY IS WALKING UP THE CORRIDOR OF STRUAN'S COTTAGE 210

from her own quarters - her gown flowing. She opens Struan's bedroom door...

IN THE BEDROOM - LIM-DIN 211

is picking up Struan's scattered evening clothes. One look at May-may and he vanishes. She passes the large fourposter, opens the bathroom door, smiles sweetly...

STRUAN 212

is in the tub, luxuriously soaking, yawning:

STRUAN
Hi lassie. What are you doing up?

She steps out of her gown and gets into the bath with him. She wears earrings and a strange jade pendant as a necklace. He finds her breathtaking, but is very much on guard:

MAY-MAY
We are having breakfast, Tai-Pan.

Ah Sam comes in with a tray. Struan glares at her. She giggles, sets down the tray, says something, exits as May-may laughs:

STRUAN
I've told Ah Sam a thousand times my bath is private! What did she say? Eh?

May-may calmly sets out the enticing Chinese dishes. He picks up a flannel to throw it:

MAY-MAY (quickly)
She said you were mighty built of man. God's Blood, Tai-Pan, man is man and woman woman.
(sweetly)
How did you enjoy that maggot mouth doxey?

STRUAN
Eh? Who?

MAY-MAY (witheringly)
Such innocence! The old cow busumed one in the green dress. Such nakedness - disgusting! That dungheap's after you for marriage, that's wat.

STRUAN
Ridiculous. How d'you know about her anyway?

MAY-MAY
I hear your Culum son is very taken with the Brock daughter. Dance seven times one evening, hoya?

212 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Eh? How'd you know that too?

MAY-MAY
Of wat use is money if not to get informations. I invest heavily tonight to watch over you, Tai-Pan, by God.

STRUAN
Eh?

MAY-MAY
Two taels of silver amongst the servants. Ah Sam talked to them - she to me. That dungheap wants to marriage, by God!
(sweetly)
You don't stare at me with cow eyes like you did that weevil drawers doxey, even though I've no clotheses on. What's wrong with my busums?

STRUAN
They're perfect - you're all perfect, now stop teasing. Where'd you get the jade?

MAY-MAY
Macao... Do you like it? It cost you heavily.

The door opens and an AMAH comes in carrying DUNCAN, a grand one year old Eurasian baby - who gurgles happily. The Amah asks May-may something and May-may answers:

STRUAN (sourly)
This is getting like Piccadilly Circus.

MAY-MAY
Piccahhh wat?

STRUAN
Never mind.

But the sight of his son pleases him and he tousles the child's hair and the Amah smiles and closes the door.

MAY-MAY
We go back to Macao, the baby and I, while you're in Canton for the trading season?

STRUAN
No - this is our home now. I'll come back a day or so every month.

213
CONT'D
(3)

MAY-MAY
This house, Tai-Pan - Gordon Chen arrange for me - I had it fung-suied by a fungsui gentleman today.

STRUAN (suspiciously)
What does he do - except cost money?

MAY-MAY
He makes sure heaven-earth-air currents are not evil or you have to move of course. And that you're not on the dragon's neck.

STRUAN
Eh?

MAY-MAY
The dragon that sleeps everywhere in the earth. God's blood, Tai-Pan, could you sleep sound with a house on your neck?

STRUAN (waits, then:)
Well, what did he say?

MAY-MAY
Turn your back, I'll soap you.

STRUAN (suspiciously)
Well, what happened? What did he say?

MAY-MAY
I'm horrified sorry, Tai-Pan, but we're right on the dragon's eyeball.

STRUAN
We're not moving and that's the end to it.

MAY-MAY
Do you want your back soaped or not?

STRUAN
We're not moving!

MAY-MAY
Really, Tai-Pan, I'm not deaf. I heard you fantastical well the first time.

Struan studies her suspiciously, then turns his back. It is a mass of ancient lash weals. She soaps him as she has done many times before:

212 CONT'D (4)

MAY-MAY
I'm very gracious glad I wasn't boy on barbarian ship with devil Brock as Captain.

STRUAN
He was just a Third Mate, lassie.

MAY-MAY
Why let him alive? So many years? Crazy mad, never mind.
(he doesn't answer. She finishes, kisses his neck)
There. I adore you anyways never mind.

He catches her in his arms and the water spills a little:

MAY-MAY
Please be careful Tai-Pan. Don't squeeze me. It's very dangerous when one is two months with child.

STRUAN
Eh?

May-may tries to be nonchalant and hide her happiness:

MAY-MAY
Aye, by God.
(shrieks)
Ah Sammmmmmmmmmmmmmahhhhhh!

Ah Sam hurries in with large towels - holds one for May-may who steps into it, then another for Struan. He glares at her and she runs out. May-may holds the towel for him:

STRUAN
So.

She just smiles at him, so happily. He picks her up easily - carries her away...

FROM THE GARDEN - THRU THE WINDOW LATTICE - THE BEDROOM 213

looks safe and content and belonging. And so do they - half soon, as they begin their loving. CAMERA wanders away - the garden is motionless in the pleasant warm night - and centers a half-broken jar in the foliage. Thin sound of a mosquito, growing, growing. There are many larva in the stagnant water. Abruptly, the siren of the mosquito ceases and in enormous CLOSE-UP, a mosquito straddles the lens.

CUT TO:

AT THE CANTON SETTLEMENT - DAY - STRUAN'S HANDS 214

rip open a letter...

STRUAN IS LEANING GRAVELY AGAINST A WHARF STANCHION 215

near Orlov's lorcha that has obviously just arrived, Orlov beside him, very ill at ease. The usual shrill hustle and bustle of the Chinese beggars, buyers, sellers, loiterers. Flies swarming in the summer heat, fly whisks everywhere. Around the square and in the garden are other traders - an air of gloom over them. Culum comes out of Brock's factory with Gorth. They laugh together - then Culum heads for Struan, his face hardening. Only Culum, Struan and Orlov wear light shirts, pants and boots. Everyone else is in their usual heavy woolens - sweating, and with prickly heat. Struan gives Culum the letter as Cooper and BRYAN, a heavy set trader, join them:

COOPER
Bad news?

STRUAN
It's from Robb. Little Karen's got the fever now.

CULUM
Oh God, no!

ORLOV (shivers)
The doctors say it's mal-aria -- bad air. There must be twenty that has it now. Hundreds of coolies they say. Work's stopped.

BRYAN
Bloody doctors, they know nothing. I'll bet my life those heathen devils brought it with them.

COOPER (irritably)
Nonsense. Everyone knows some earth is bad - that it gives off poisonous gases at night. Like the Roman marshes for God's sake! If you breathe the gases - you get the fever, it's that simple!

STRUAN (sharply)
Then why don't I have it, eh? I've slept in Happy Valley. So have you. And why do you get it only there, nowhere else? There's a fine breeze in Happy Valley most of the time.

COOPER
Maybe you're immune. The way you dress it's unbelievable you aren't dead of a chill long since.

215
CONT'D
(2)

BRYAN
What's the cure, Tai-Pan?

STRUAN
There isn't one - purging and bleeding is what they're doing to Karen, poor lassie.

BRYAN (shudders)
Bloody doctors - that's all they know.
(beat)
It's the will of God.

COOPER
If the air of Happy Valley's bad -- we're all ruined.

They wander off unhappily. Struan glances at Orlov who drops his eyes under the intensity. Culum sadly hands back the letter:

CULUM
Terrible!

Then, unable to hold back, Orlov whispers hoarsely:

ORLOV
I know it is bad, Tai-Pan. There'll be five deaths by morning.

STRUAN
Whose?

ORLOV
I don't know. I swear it. I don't know.

Struan and Culum begin to head for their factory. As they walk across the square, their voices down:

STRUAN
I'm leaving for Hong Kong tomorrow. You follow next week.

CULUM
Very well. Is Orlov always right?

STRUAN
More right than wrong.

CULUM
The Brock family moved back aboard weeks ago. Terrible about poor little Karen.

STRUAN
Yes.

215
CONT'D
(3)

CULUM
We'll have to abandon Happy Valley, won't we?

STRUAN
Impossible! Do you know how much money we've invested there?

CULUM (involuntarily)
Gorth says --- Gorth says it's the only solution.

STRUAN
I'll bet Brock doesn't agree with him. He's as heavily committed as we are. How many times do you have to be told: Gorth's not your friend.

CULUM
I know it's difficult for you - and his father - to understand but we get on well together.

STRUAN
I understand Gorth too well.

CULUM
I'd rather not discuss it.

STRUAN
Do you want to discuss Tess Brock?

CULUM (flushes)
What about Miss Brock?

STRUAN
Did you get another letter today?

CULUM
Yes - are you prying into my mail?

STRUAN
For the love of God don't get uppety, it's too hot.

CULUM
I don't think my -- my affection for - for Miss Brock is any concern of yours.

STRUAN
Have you considered that you're being used?

CULUM
Have you considered your enmity colours all your thinking?

215 CONT'D (4)

STRUAN
Is it affection - or love?
(Culum hesitates)
Be honest.

CULUM (helplessly)
I love her, of course I love her - you can't understand what she means to me. What am I going to do? I love her.

STRUAN
Do you think Brock'll approve your marrying her?

CULUM
God help me, no! Of course he won't.

STRUAN
God help you, I think he will.

CUT TO:

IN BROCK'S PRIVATE QUARTERS AT DUSK - BROCK 216

stares off warily:

BROCK
What about Tess?

STRUAN
Culum's in love with her.

Brock takes a long pull from his huge tankard, sweatily encased in woolens, hides a momentary flash of pleasure. Struan, in an open shirt, sips brandy. Both men edged and dangerous:

BROCK
They've met but once - then some afternoon walks with Liza. Three.

STRUAN
Yes - but he's in love with her. They've been writing - as you must know. So we'd better talk - openly.

BROCK
Are you asking formal for her hand for your son?

STRUAN
No. That's his right. But we should talk about it. Now.

BROCK (surge of anger)
What we <u>should</u> be talking about is mal-aria. How'd we stop being ruined, eh?

216 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Tess. What about Tess?

BROCK (controls with an effort)
Why now? She's young. Very young. Barely sixteen.

STRUAN
How old was Liza when you married? Or my Ronalda, eh?

BROCK (after pause)
What's your feeling?

STRUAN (bitterly)
You know it, I'm oppossed. I don't trust you - or Gorth. But Culum's forced my hand again. A father can't always make his son do what he wants. What's your feeling?

BROCK (after pause)
I'll accept him - if he asks formal. They can wed when she's eighteen.

STRUAN (slams)
I never thought you'd be so gutless as to use a girl's skirts against me.

BROCK (reddens)
Now you listen to me! You brought this up - not me - so listen. I've thought and fretted a lot about this and I'm opposed too - but Tess loves him, and let's say the obvious - Tess's like Juliet to his Romeo and I don't want her ending up on a marble slab just 'cause I hate you. She loves your boy.

STRUAN
I don't believe it.

BROCK
It's the mortal truth. Before I left it was Culum this and Culum that. Lina's writ a dozen times that Tess's mooning and sighing like a sick filly...Tess's writ fifty times till I'm sick to death of what Culum said and what he didn't say. We're both trapped.

STRUAN
It's puppy love.

216 CONT'D (3)

BROCK
You're wrong.
(quaffs his ale)
I'll make you an offer - fair and square. Mayhaps it's possible for the young'uns to put to rights what - what isn't possible for us. If I can break you I will...destroy you I will...the day you come against me I'll kill you. But give them a fair wind, an open sea, and safe harbour an' I'll do likewise. Afore God!

He puts out his hand. Struan stares at it. Both sweating:

STRUAN
I'll shake on Culum and Tess. But not on Gorth.

The vein in Brock's forehead throbs heavily. He does not withdraw his hand. They shake and there is a strange silence outside which at first they do not notice:

BROCK
Now have a last drink to seal it and then get to hell out of my house.

Now they hear the silence. In the same instant. They rush for the window. All the Chinese in the square are motionless - staring at the entrances to the square. Many Chinese soldiers clatter in - some on horseback - bows and arrows and a few muskets. Vendors pack hastily. Brock and Struan - with one mind - rush from the room grabbing a musket each as they go.

CUT TO:

AT DUSK - A CLASHING CYMBALLED PROCESSION 217

is coming out of Hog Lane. Torches everywhere illuminate the gloaming. In the lead is a group of soldiers with lashes and they clear a path. Behind them are twenty coolies carrying two ornate open sedan chairs. In the first is a very high Chinese Mandarin, LEE-TSU; in the second, Jin-qua - richly dressed and impassive. Directly behind Lee Tsu's chair - tied ignominiously to it is a lone figure of an elderly man, who walks bowed down with chains...

STRUAN AND OTHERS IN THE ENGLISH GARDEN 218

gasp as they recognise the man:

218 CONT'D (2)

LONGSTAFF
Good God! That's Ti-sen.

ZERGEYEV
Who?

LONGSTAFF
The Chinese Plenipotentiary! He's cousin to the Emperor!

All the traders are in the walled garden now. Obviously Struan's factory is the easiest to defend. The mob in the square has thickened - thousands of silent faces...

LEE-TSU 219

waves his lotus wand of office and the procession stops. The soldiers clear a space around Ti-sen. Lee-tsu takes out a proclamation and begins to read it in Chinese...

LONGSTAFF 220
turns to SINCLAIR, his secretary, a young, lithe man:

LONGSTAFF
What's he saying?

SINCLAIR (listens - then whitens)
It's an Imperial Edict your Excellency. He says he's the new Plenipotentiary, Lee-tsu --- that the Emperor has repudiated the contemptible treaty of Chuenpi --- that ---

LONGSTAFF
Repudiated our Treaty? What bloody cheek!

SINCLAIR
--- that Queen Victoria should present herself at the gates of Peking with a suitable indemnity in bullion, that we're ordered out of Hong Kong -- and it ends: "and as a symbol of our displeasure Ti-sen will be publicly punished and all his property forfeit".

The traders are astonished - Struan curiously set-faced...

TI-SEN 221

chalk-white, kneels at an order from a huge soldier. Then the

lash rips into his back. Again. Again. No sound from him - or the crowd - Jin-qua watches. Emotionlessly... 221 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN 222

watches, with all of them:

BROCK
Well - this means war again. Good say I. Now we can get our mainland ports and forget Hong Kong.

STRUAN
You'd better thank God for Hong Kong - without it we couldn't launch a war or protect ourselves or protect any mainland ports. I think we'd better prepare to retreat, your Excellency.

LONGSTAFF
But good God, Dirk, there's been no trouble in Canton in a hundred and fifty years ---

BROCK
I don't like this at all. Gorth - get your bullyboys armed.

LEE-TSU 223

waves a hand and the soldier forces Ti-sen to his feet and the coolies carry the chair out of the square again. Every fifteen yards the lash descends on Ti-sen whose back is a bloody mess. A current of excitement hangs over the square. All the Chinese turn to look at the English garden. Ominously.

CUT TO:

A MOB 224

starts pouring into the far end. Youths mostly, with axes, torches, banners. They fall on the far factory and begin to rape it...

THE CROWD IN THE SQUARE 225

hesitate and then, whipped by the screaming, yelling, turn their backs on the English garden, rush to the next factory...

STRUAN 226

turns to Longstaff:

226 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
You'd better order an immediate evacuation.

LONGSTAFF
Damned scallywags. How dare they!
(a command)
I suggest we retire to our ships, gentlemen.

BROCK AND GORTH 227

start for theirs...

OTHER TRADERS 228

scatter for their boats, unafraid. The mob - strangely - seems to pay little attention to the foreigners, concentrating on the rape of empty factories...

THE MOB 229

burning, looting, killing each other in their carelessness. A huge piano is shoved out of a window to kill many below - others are trampled to death....

LONGSTAFF 230

glances back to Zergeyev, jovially and totally unafraid. Zergeyev's servants are frightened to death over his safety:

LONGSTAFF
Ah your Highness, perhaps you'd join me aboard?

ZERGEYEV
It seems you need help in Asia, your Excellency.

LONGSTAFF
This - why my dear sir - it's just a minor misunderstanding...
(harder)
...which Her Majesty's forces will correct forthwith.

ANOTHER MOB 231

bursts into the square from Hog Lane and rapes another building. Now the far end of the Settlement is wall ablaze. Many Chinese are caught in the growing holocaust. Strangely the mob still pays no attention to the escaping traders...

BROCK 232

on the quarterdeck of his lorcha has his swivel guns pointing shorewards ready to protect the retreat. The mob still attacks the buildings - then a group falls on their factory. Gorth picks up a musket and fires at the mob jammed into the doorway. A man falls. Gorth picks up another musket...

STRUAN 233

leads the orderly retreat from The Noble House. He and Longstaff are either side of Zergeyev, Culum just behind - then Glassing with his marines spread out. Guns are going off here and there...

A FACTORY 234

gushes fire and the fire begins to spread rapidly...

GORTH 235

sees Struan and his party hurrying for their lorcha. He glances at Brock who is busy elsewhere. He aims at Struan, fires...

ZERGEYEV 236

reels, and collapses. Aghast Struan picks him up - hurries for the lorcha, Longstaff appalled beside him...

GORTH 237

calmly picks up another musket, fires at the mob...

THE MOB 238

wheels now and falls on The Noble House - streams thru the garden and into the factory itself...

ABOARD THE LORCHA - STRUAN 239

puts Zergeyev down. White-faced Longstaff kneels beside him. Obvbusly, Zergeyev is dead. Brock orders his lorcha into the river. Orlov gets underway as:

LONGSTAFF (very worried)
I'm afraid we've an international incident on our hands. Terrible.

STRUAN
What?

239
CONT'D
(2)

LONGSTAFF
This will give the Tsar a cause celebre to send a punitive force into Asia. God only knows what trouble will come from this.

The two servant bodyguards are petrified. Then they both jump ashore and fall into the mob as:

STRUAN
Come back!

LONGSTAFF
Poor devils - they could never return without their Master.
(very worried)
We'll have an Inquest. And inform the Foreign Secretary. He's bound to be terribly irritated.

STRUAN
Did you see muskets amongst the Chinese?

LONGSTAFF
I don't remember any. A few perhaps.

STRUAN
I think it'll be one of our bullets.

LONGSTAFF
You're surely not suggesting -----

STRUAN (overriding him)
I've dozens of enemies.

Longstaff is even more concerned. An undercurrent of tension in Struan as he stares back at the burning settlement:

LONGSTAFF
It was an accident - has to be.
(looks back)
Madness to do that. What do they hope to gain?

STRUAN
Face - they've tossed out the barbarians.

LONGSTAFF
Well, we'll see about 'face'. We'll go north against Peking at once.

239 CONT'D (3)

STRUAN
No. First here - Canton. Tomorrow. Send the battleships. Give Canton a twelve hour ultimatum: five million in bullion or you'll reduce it to ashes. We demand five - settle for one.

LONGSTAFF
They'll never pay it. They can't.

STRUAN (strangely)
God help us if they don't.

He gets up and moves to the stern where Culum watches the burning settlement. Quietly:

STRUAN
I talked to Brock about Tess.

Blood rushes to Culum's face and his heart pounds. Angrily:

CULUM
I thought I told you I didn't want you interfering in my life.

STRUAN
I thought you might like to know that you're engaged.

CULUM (stupified)
Eh? Brock said yes?

STRUAN
You'll have to ask him formally. And you'll have to wait until she's eighteen.

CULUM
He said yes?

STRUAN
Yes.

CULUM (after pause)
But why? Why did he agree?

Struan shrugs - moves away to get the lorcha ship-shape. Orlov stares at Culum strangely.

CUT TO:

240 AT HAPPY VALLEY UNDER A HOT SUN - CULUM AND STRUAN

jump ashore from the longboat onto the wharf of their half-completed, huge factory and head down its length - urgently. Both are pale-faced. The whole of the valley is deserted by coolies - a few traders walk around, staring up at the skeletons of their buildings. In the harbour, behind them, are clippers and other merchant sh...

IN THE FOYER OF THE FACTORY - DE VARGAS 241

looks up, whitens:

DE VARGAS
Madre de Dios - we did not expect you, Senhor.

STRUAN
Where's Mr. Robb?

DE VARGAS
Upstairs, Senhor.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBB'S LIVING QUARTERS - SARAH 242

is sitting beside a window, her baby sleeping fitfully in her lap. She has aged greatly - her hair grey-streaked and lank. Her fly whisk waves desultorily, the living room partially furnished. Struan opens the door, Culum following:

STRUAN
Hello Sarah.
(she just looks at him)
How's Karen?

SARAH
Karen's dead.

STRUAN
When did it happen?

SARAH
Two days ago - three. I don't know.

Her voice is flat. Struan wipes a driblet of sweat from his chin:

STRUAN
We're the first back from Canton. They burned the Settlement. We got Robb's letter just before we left.

SARAH
I watched your cutter come ashore.

STRUAN
Where's Robb?

She motions listlessly to a door. Struan goes to it...

IN ROBB'S BEDROOM - STRUAN 243

enters and comes over to the bed. Robb is sleeping - grey-faced. Then Struan's soul twists as he touches him - touches his face. Cold. Dead - not sleeping. Struan walks leadened out of the room...

IN THE LIVING ROOM - SARAH 244

doesn't take her eyes from the window. The fan goes back and forth. She feels Struan's hatred. To Culum's shock:

SARAH (toneless)
Robb died an hour ago. Two or three hours - I don't remember. Before he died he gave me a message for you - it was this morning, I think. 'Tell Dirk I never wanted to be Tai-Pan. Never.'

STRUAN
I'll - I'll make all the arrangements.

SARAH
We're leaving on the next boat.

STRUAN
You'll be looked after, Sarah. You're rich and - and young and there can be a future for ---

SARAH (suddenly, viciously)
I'm twenty-eight - but I'm old and used up. I know it and you know it! That's the truth. And another truth - you're glad Ronalda's dead - she served her stint, eh? Who's next? The daughter of a godrotting duke? But whoever she is you'll suck her dry like everyone else. I curse you before God and pray that I live to spit on your grave.

The baby begins to wail - but neither seem to hear him:

STRUAN
You forgot another truth, Sarah. All your bitterness is because you believe you picked the wrong brother - and you made Robb's life a hell because of it.

SARAH
I closed his eyes. I closed Marsh's eyes. Who'll close your eyes, Tai-Pan

Hatred swamps the room - violence. Culum is white-faced.

CUT TO:

THE DOOR IN THE WALL OF STRUAN'S HOUSE 245

opens and Struan enters. Sun high, grand clouds. Behind him, Culum can be seen hurring towards the wharf and the waiting long-boat. The ships bob at anchor beyond - the White Witch prominent. Struan shuts the door. No sound. The garden is dry. He goes up the veranda steps...

INTO THE FOYER 246

where he automatically checks the barometer on gimbals. Still no sound. He wipes the sweat off, then walks down the corridor...

MAY-MAY'S QUARTERS 247

are empty. No amah's chattering from the servants' quarters. The baby's crib empty. His heart is almost frozen. He glances into the garden, his heart starts beating again...

MAY-MAY 248

turns the corner - some flowers in her arms - nicely pregnant. She sees him...

STRUAN COMES OUT INTO THE GARDEN 249

and holds her in his arms. Breathlessly:

MAY MAY
Be careful Tai-Pan, you'll crush my flowers.

He releases her and she puts the flowers down carefully, then throws her arms around his neck:

MAY-MAY
Welcome, by God, did you bring me a present?

STRUAN
Eh?

MAY-MAY
Jades - or jewels, hey?
(then more seriously)
Joss is joss Tai-Pan. The gods had need of them - never mind.

She looks at him - sadly seeing the depth of his mood:

STRUAN
Where's the baby?

MAY-MAY
I sent him with his Amah to Macao - out of danger.

249
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN
How many of the coolies have died?

MAY-MAY (after pause)
One hundred - two.

STRUAN
Pack!

MAY-MAY
What?

STRUAN (exiting)
Pack, you're moving to Resting Cloud tonight - the fungsui's very bad here.

He hurries out of the house. She stares after him happily.

CUT TO:

IN THE MAIN CABIN HMS VENGEANCE - LONGSTAFF 250

shakily takes some snuff, his face white:

STRUAN
Happy Valley's dead - so we must build a new town -- there!

LONGSTAFF
Eh? I can't order that! I'd be responsible for all losses.

STRUAN
You are. So you're going to reimburse everyone immediately for the money they've put out. You'll use the ransom money you'll get from Canton.

Longstaff nearly has a heart attack. He sneezes violently:

LONGSTAFF
Good God, I can't do that - that bullion belongs to the Crown. That's impossible!

STRUAN
You've decided Hong Kong's too valuable to risk.

LONGSTAFF
Impossible - I can't - absolutely not.

STRUAN
Your whole future depends on it.

LONGSTAFF
Eh?

250
CONT'D
(2)

Struan pours two sherrys, tries to control his anxiety:

STRUAN
Your reputation in England's tied to Hong Kong. Your Asian policy - hence the Queen's - is concentrated here. With Hong Kong safe, you as governor can dominate Asia. Without it - never.
(hands him the glass)
Without a town here you've no safety - nor has the Queen. You have to repay the traders or they can't rebuild. Don't forget you're the Queen's standard bearer here - against plague, Act of God - or foreign interference. Even the Tsar knows the value of what you're doing here, eh?
(carelessly)
You get most of the money back immediately anyway.

LONGSTAFF
I don't understand.

STRUAN
Hold another land sale - the land costs you nothing, eh? That money goes back into your Treasury. And then there's the Canton ransom money. That costs nothing - just a threat!! I'd say your astuteness would impress the entire cabinet - and the Queen. Permanent honours go with such approval.

LONGSTAFF
I entirely agree. I'll make the announcement at once.
(suddenly anxious)
They will pay, won't they?

STRUAN
One million is fair - very fair ransom for a city of a million souls.

LONGSTAFF
Then we should settle for double - even three million.

STRUAN
Then you'd lose face and make them very angry. You forget they're Chinese.

Longstaff frowns, trying to work that one out.

AT DUSK - IN HER QUARTERS AT HAPPY VALLEY - MAY-MAY 251

is surrounded by the chaos of packing, dressed in black coolie pants and tunic - the large coolie hat is nearby. She sits serenely, checking her jewels as Ah Sam and Lim Dim hurry in and out. Struan enters deep in thought:

STRUAN
Sedan chair's here.

MAY-MAY
Good. I'm almost ready.
(off hand - but not)
I hear you had bad troubles in Canton.

STRUAN
Yes - but they'll pay for it - we're sending the fleet against Canton.

MAY-MAY
For ransom?

STRUAN
We'll settle for a million in bullion.

MAY-MAY
Wise. Very wise.
(studies a piece of jade)
And the young lovers? I hear she writes every day. He also.

STRUAN (his face closing)
Brock says he'll accept Culum as a son-in-law.

MAY-MAY (cheerfully)
A wise match if he is a good man - a cunning one if he is evil and he's evil never mind. Why not give them a house to play with?

STRUAN
Eh?

She puts the little jewel satchel in her sleeve. As they walk out of the house:

MAY-MAY
She is young, so give them land - let them plan their <u>own</u> home - that would fantastical occupy them. Next - I counsel immediate marriage.

251
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN (explodes)
That's out of the question. And an insult to Robb's memory!

MAY-MAY
The sooner they marry, the sooner Culum's out from Brock's grasp, heya? Is Culum going to spend all his time with Gorth when he can play bosums - certainly very gracious no. Would you?

STRUAN
No.

MAY-MAY
But Brock will think early marriage is good for him now that Culum is next Tai-Pan so it will be easy to trap his agreement. Gorth will oppose because he loses his hold over Culum so he will fall out with the lovers and his father. Simple.

STRUAN
I love you for your 'simple'.

MAY-MAY (happily)
You're just mendacity for your Old Mother.

Now they are in the garden. Gordon Chen is waiting beside a closed sedan chair with enclosing curtains, near the bolted garden door. He bows deeply. She smiles, returns the bow formally:

MAY-MAY
Ah Gordon Chen. You should not have troubled.

GORDON CHEN
It is my duty, Great Lady.
(to Struan)
I've made all the arrangements, Tai-Pan - a sampan will take us to Resting Cloud.

STRUAN
I'll wait for you aboard.

May-may adjusts her coolie hat and all at once she is like a thousand other Chinese. Completely disguised she steps into the chair. She sighs:

MAY-MAY
Ayeeyah! I am glad and sorry to leave this home never mind.

She pulls the curtains to. Sound of mosquitos, not unpleasant...

GORDON CHEN (Shooting towards him thru thick foliage) 252

is half seen as he unbolts the wall door and the chair coolies pad in. Struan's chair is waiting outside the wall. A mosquito's siren begins and abruptly CAMERA starts flying jerkily towards May-may's chair. It slams towards her bare ankle and...

IN ENORMOUS CLOSE-UP - THE MOSQUITO'S SPIKE 253

stabs deep into her flesh.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. HAPPY VALLEY (from helicopter) - DAY 254

is desolate. Empty of movement. CAMERA moves away. Gradually the sounds of hammering, digging, happy chattering. And then Glessing's Point is revealed - a hive of industry under an early sun. Already surveyors are marking out plots along Queen's Road and coolies are piling building materials and some are digging foundations. Longstaff and an entourage walk along on an inspection tour and an immediate cheer goes up when he is seen - never has he been so popular. Above Glessing's Point is the encroaching tumbling mess of the Chinese Tai-ping-shan settlement, grown astonishingly. More ships in the harbour - many new arrivals - and one merchantman slipping her moorings, homeward bound. Cheers and good wishes go with her. Culum and Tess are solemnly pacing out a lot and clearly arguing about what should go where. Gorth comes from the ramshackled shanty town near the Dockyard, sees them - goes over to them:

CULUM
Well, if you insist, but I think the fireplace should be here.

TESS
Very well, dear. But then how are we going to use the chimney for the kitchen --- which is over there?

Culum stares from here to there, then laughs happily:

CULUM
We'll have the only two chimneys' house in Hong Kong!

GORTH
'morning!

Gorth has obviously had a long night out but even so Tess runs to him and hugs him and Culum is as overjoyed:

254
CONT'D
(2)

TESS
Oh, the most marvelous news! Father's agreed for us to marry in three months and Culum's coming with us to Macao today to buy furniture and everything.

GORTH
Eh?

TESS
Oh, isn't it so wonderful. Now we don't have to wait till I'm eighteen and...
(she trails off seeing his face)
What's the matter, Gorth?

Gorth tries desperately to keep his boiling rage off his face and out of his voice. But they both see it:

GORTH
But it was agreed - not before you were eighteen!

CULUM
Yes, but last night - Mister - Mr. Brock and the Tai-Pan - they talked and then, he changed his mind. I thought you'd be delighted too!

TESS
But you've always been happy about us - why have you changed?

GORTH (now outwardly controlled)
I haven't, Tess. Well this is cause for celebration, eh? So you're coming with us, Culum? Good. Best get ready, eh? We'll celebrate...paint old Macao red white and blue...

He walks off and they stare after him uneasily.

CUT TO:

IN THE MAIN CABIN OF THE WHITE WITCH - BROCK 255

slams down his tankard angrily:

BROCK
It's my decision and that's the end to it!

255
CONT'D
(2)

GORTH (as angrily)
He's outsmarted you again! An early marriage ruins everything,

BROCK
I know what I'm doing.

GORTH
Once they wed you've lost your hold over him and she'll turn against you.

BROCK
Never - not my Tess! The sooner he's wed, the sooner I can bend him to our ways! He hates his father - hates him!

GORTH
Break the match!

BROCK
No - I gave my word! You were enthusiastic for it - wot's changed your mind?

GORTH
When I was for it Robb was alive and the Tai-Pan was leaving for good. But now he'll stay and he'll train Culum against us and turn Tess against us!

BROCK
Dirk'd never leave, whatever he said. I know him. And I know Tess.

GORTH
Then when're you leaving eh? When'm I taking over, eh?

BROCK
When - when he leaves - or's dead.

GORTH (slams)
Then he better be deaded right smartly.

BROCK
You'd better possess yourself with patience.

GORTH
He outsmarted you on the bullion - on their house - and the marriage - everything. He's playing you like a fish. Tess's your weakness - he knows it and you're set up with her as your wrecker's beacon!

255 CONT'D (3)

BROCK (flushed with rage)
I know what I'm doing!

GORTH
No you don't! You're afraid an- you're old - OLD! So get out of the way and let a man do a man's job, by God!

Brock crashes his chair over and stands, violent and blood in his eyes. Both men are armed - both near breaking point. Then Brock concedes:

BROCK
Don't - don't interfere between Tess 'n Culum...and don't go after that devil by - by yourself or you'll meet your Maker.

Gorth, suffused with victory, hurls his chair out of the way, slams the door behind him.

CUT TO:

NIGHT IN A WHORE HOUSE - THE MADAM 256

stares off distastefully and her false teeth chomp. Rough clientele arrive and depart. She shakes her head at Gorth:

MADAM
I'm not wanting any more of your business, Mr. Brock. The last one were hurt brutal.

GORTH (throws down a handful of guineas)
Here! Wot's another yellow monkey to you, you old witch? And here's the same to keep your trap shut!

Her avaricious eyes only see the gold on the table.

CUT TO:

DAY - A SMALL STATUE OF A RECLINING NUDE (A "DOCTOR'S LADY") 257

is being taken out of a cabinet aboard Resting Cloud by...

AH SAM 258

who crosses May-may's bedroom and goes into Struan's quarters. May-may is in bed, peeked and ill at ease...

IN STRUAN'S QUARTERS - STRUAN 259

and Gordon Chen are with KEE FA TAN, an elderly, thin-fingered Chinese doctor - herbalist. Ah Sam discreetly closes May-May's door, then goes up to the doctor, starts chattering Chinese to him, pointing at various parts of the statue:

STRUAN (irritably)
What's he doing?

GORDON CHEN
Making a diagnosis.

STRUAN (more irritably)
From the statue?

GORDON CHEN
Well it wouldn't be right for him to see the lady if it's not necessary.
(listens. Then Kee says something to him)
With your permission, Tai-Pan, he would like to examine the lady.

Seething with impatience, Struan leads the way...

MAY-MAY'S BED 260

is now discreetly closed by curtains - and she is a shadowy figure behind it. The doctor pauses, then asks for her wrist...

THE DOCTOR'S LONG FINGERS 261

touch her wrist slightly - seeking deep down...

STRUAN 262

shifts impatiently in the tense silence, Ah Sam and Gordon Chen watch with baited breath. The doctor's eyes are closed and he concentrates...

STRUAN
What's he doing now?

GORDON CHEN (whispers, calming)
Listening to her pulses. There are nine in each wrist. Three on the surface, three lower and three very deep. Please be patient, Tai-Pan, it is very difficult to listen with fingers.

The tension builds. Then the fingers fix - relax. A pause and the wrist disappears and the doctor leads them back into...

STRUAN'S QUARTERS 263

and firmly excludes Ah Sam. Then he starts speaking softly to Gordon Chen. Gordon Chen's eyes widen:

STRUAN
What's he saying?

GORDON CHEN
I didn't know the lady was with child, Tai-Pan.

He listens again. Growing concern - trying to hide it. Then:

GORDON CHEN
He says that a poison has entered her lower limbs and is centered in her liver which is now - maladjusted. In two days there will be fever. Then after four or five more days again fever. Then again.

STRUAN
Happy Valley fever?
(Gordon Chen nods. Ashen.)
What's his cure?

Gordon Chen cross-questions the doctor for a moment:

GORDON CHEN
A tea made from the bark of a tree which grows somewhere in the South Seas. If you drink it every few hours it kills the fever.

STRUAN
Tell him to get it immediately.

GORDON CHEN
That's the trouble, Tai-Pan. He hasn't got any - he's only heard about it.

STRUAN
Well, tell him to get some.

GORDON CHEN
He doesn't know where to look.

STRUAN
God's death! Tell him to find some - whatever the cost.

GORDON CHEN
But Tai-Pan - he doesn't know...

263 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN (overriding him)
Twenty thousand in silver for her cure. Whoever finds it!

Gordon Chen gasps. He translates this to the doctor. They both bow and hurry out. Struan wipes the sweat off his brow, collects himself.

CUT TO:

A SENIOR NAVAL DOCTOR ABOARD HMS VENGEANCE - BY DAY 264

shakes his head wearily:

DOCTOR
I keep telling you, Mr. Struan, I've never heard of a bark - or a cure. Bleeding works wonders with some - coupled with heroic purging...

CUT TO:

ANOTHER DOCTOR - A SOLDIER, AT THE CANTONMENT - BY NIGHT 265

laughs contemptuously. Struan is lined and strained:

ARMY DOCTOR
A tea did you say? Oh, Mr. Struan - that's an old wives tale.

STRUAN
What sort of old wives tale?

ARMY DOCTOR
Oh it's as old as the hills. A legend that the Spanish Countess of Cinchona found a bark in Peru - introduced it into Europe two hundred years ago as cinchona bark - sometimes called Jesuits Bark - supposed to cure mal-aria. Those damned Papists say anything to get converts. It's just a legend.

STRUAN
Where could I get some?

ARMY DOCTOR
Peru - I suppose - but it's just a legend, you know. Bleeding and calomel purging - that's the answer.

CUT TO:

BY NIGHT IN MAY-MAY'S QUARTERS - STRUAN 266

sits on the bed and stares down helplessly. May-may is under a heap of blankets shivering - ice in her veins. Ah Sam stands stoically nearby: 'It's joss' is written all over her. Struan's vigil shows in the fatigue lines and the stain of beard...

MAY-MAY 267

moans, deep in freezing coma. Suddenly she cries out and the fever breaks and sweat begins to pour out of her. Struan sighs with relief, grabs the towel and begins to wipe the sweat off her. Ah Sam nods to herself, sits on her haunches.

CUT TO:

FROM RESTING CLOUD'S DECK - DAWN COMES TO THE HARBOUR 268

bathing the ships with light. And promise. Struan on the deck rubs his face tiredly and goes below...

MAY-MAY 269

is awake. Clean now and freshly perfumed but tired, heavily shadowed. Ah Sam chatters to her happily. Struan comes in, as tired as May-May:

MAY-MAY (cheerfully)
Hello Tai-Pan! That is my joss, heya? Happy Valley Fever? Heya?

STRUAN
Yes. But the doctor is getting some medicine - a bark. He'll have it today - or tomorrow, don't worry.

MAY-MAY
Good - good. I feel so good now - but so tired.

STRUAN
Why're you smiling, lassie?

MAY-MAY
How else can you dominate joss? If you smile when you lose in life - then you win.

Struan tries to think about that but cannot shove the misery from his head:

STRUAN
Would you like something to eat? You should build up your strength.

269 CONT'D (2)

MAY-MAY
I'll have some chicken soup in a minute. How many days before the next fever?

STRUAN
Four - or five.

MAY-MAY
Four days is forever never mind.

She closes her eyes and slips into peaceful sleep.

CUT TO:

STRUAN ENTERS HIS OWN QUARTERS 270

to find Gordon Chen waiting for him. Hope flooding:

STRUAN
You found the bark?

GORDON CHEN
No - not yet Tai-Pan. How's the lady?

STRUAN
Weak. Very weak.

He wanders over to the porthole, stares at the morning. In misery. Almost mumbling:

STRUAN
It's supposed to come from Peru. Cinchona bark. Jesuit's bark. It's a legend. Where in God's name?

GORDON CHEN (slowly)
If you want horseflies - go to a horse! If you want Jesuit's bark ----

The vagrant thought explodes and Struan's fatigue vanishes:

STRUAN
Where else?

CUT TO:

STRUAN'S FIST AT SUNSET 271

is pounding on the iron door of the Bishop's Palace in Macao...

STRUAN AND THE HUGE PALACE 272

dominate the whole of Macao and the harbour that lies below the hill. China Cloud can be seen swinging at anchor in the last of the sunshine. Again Struan pounds the door and his hammering mixes

with the deep voices of monks chanting Matins in the nearby Cathedral. Then the tiny figure of a liveried Portuguese servant hurrying thru the cloisters. He opens the door - begins to curse him away. But Struan shoves him aside... 272 CONT'D (2)

THE FOYER 273

is vast and rich. Struan selects the first room at random:

STRUAN
The Bishop, I want to see the Bishop!
(servant protests, then backs off)
The Bishop!

CUT TO:

VALERIAN GUINEPPA - BISHOP OF MACAO 274

strides imperiously along the corridor followed by a liveried servant. He is an extraordinarily striking man - tall, patrician with a hook nose, black eyes, and strength. He turns into the small room that Struan commandeered. His eyes narrow as he recognizes his visitor...

STRUAN 275

turns from the window. Both men study each other. Enemies - worthy enemies:

STRUAN
Good afternoon, your Grace. Sorry to come uninvited.

VALERIAN (after pause)
Welcome in the name of God, senhor. Would you care for Madeira?

STRUAN
Thank you.

Valerian sits - very much a General of the Church of Rome. Majenta robes - jewelled crucifix on his breast, skull cap. The servant offers wine and closes the door after him. Silence again. Then, as watchful:

VALERIAN
What would the Tai-Pan of The Noble House want from me?

STRUAN
Help.

VALERIAN
Papist help?

275 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Have you heard of cinchona bark? Jesuits bark?

VALERIAN
Ah! You have the Happy Valley Fever.

STRUAN
Sorry to disappoint you, Your Grace. No - but someone I cherish has it. Does the bark cure the fever?

VALERIAN
If the mal-aria is the same as that in Peru. I was a missionary there - as a youth. It cured me - with the grace of God.

STRUAN
Do you have any in Macao?

Valerian's long fingers play with his beads:

VALERIAN
I do not know, Senhor Struan.

STRUAN
If cinchona will cure our mal-aria I'm ready to pay. Money, you can have that --- power, you can have that. I'll even go through the form of becoming a Catholic if you want - but it would be meaningless as you know and I know. Whatever you want I'll give it if it's in my power to give - for the cure of <u>one</u> person. Name your price!

VALERIAN
For one who comes as a supplicant your manners are curious.

STRUAN
Yes - but I think we've the means of trade - irrespective of what you think of me - or I of you. What's your price?

A long silence. Both men's will seek to dominate the other's:

VALERIAN
I can answer none of those questions now.

STRUAN (gets up)
I'll come back tonight, Your Grace.

275
CONT'D
(3)

VALERIAN
There's no need to return, Senhor Struan.

STRUAN
You're saying you'll not trade?

VALERIAN
I'm saying that tonight may be too soon. For answers - to so many questions.

STRUAN
There'll be a man at your gate.
(pause)
Whatever the cost - remember!
(bleak pause, then he goes out)
Thank you, Your Grace.

VALERIAN
Go with God, senhor.

He stares thoughtfully after Struan, his long fingers playing with the bejewelled cross. The front door slams to.

CUT TO:

276

THE STRUAN RESIDENCE AT SUNSET

on the praya. Few people about. Struan walks wearily up the steps of the huge colonnaded house. The door swings open. LO CHUM, a benigned, smiling old Chinese:

LO CHUM
Hola, Tai-Pan, good you see, very very.

277

THE FOYER

is wide and high. Good furniture. Macao mould here and there:

LO CHUM
Room all-ready, Tai-Pan. Bar'f never mind.

STRUAN
I stay other house - with Missee.

LO CHUM
Poor Missee - bad werry bad, never mind.

Gordon Chen comes from one of the living rooms:

STRUAN
Oh, hello lad. The Bishop's sending word out. Perhaps - perhaps not.

277 CONT'D (2)

GORDON CHEN (begins to exit)
I will add my efforts to his, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
Good. You'll stay here, of course.

GORDON CHEN (delicately)
If you don't mind I'll stay with my mother and step-father.

STRUAN
Very well - have you seen Culum?

Lo Chum butts in importantly and mimes a very sick man:

LO CHUM
He sleep - werry sick! Sedan chair bring him back s'morning never mind.

STRUAN
He all night out, heya?

LO CHUM (chuckles and bobs his head)
Plenty fun, ayeeyah! Mass'er werry sick. Naughty bad boy never mind.

Struan shakes his head wearily, goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

278 THE NEXT MORNING - IN THE VAST BEDROOM - CULUM

looks and feels terrible. He holds his head in his hands - and the slightest sound hurts:

CULUM
I don't remember - I just don't remember. Leave me alone.

STRUAN
Try again, laddie. Come on try! You've been rolled and drugged.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
You've slept almost twenty-four hours. No one sleeps that long - just from getting drunk! It's the oldest trick in the world. Start at the beginning.

278 CONT'D (2)

CULUM
We -- we were at the Club - some friends and I - gambling - I'd won a hundred guineas and then - well we were all talking about - girls and well I felt sort of on fire and so I decided to --- I had to go to a --- a house.

STRUAN (tries to keep the concern out of his voice)
You went alone?
(Culum nods miserably)
Who gave you the address?

CULUM
I don't remember - please leave me alone -- please. I just remember getting a sedan chair ---

STRUAN
Was Gorth at the Club?

CULUM
For a while - but he left early - he - he went to Hong Kong for a few days.

STRUAN
What was this 'sort of fire', laddie?
(harshening)
Come on lad!

CULUM
Please - not so loudly --- well it was like ---my loins felt on fire --- I just felt on fire for a girl that's all --- I just had to -- - oh God I feel terrible.

Struan thinks a moment and then goes out...

279

ON THE LANDING - STRUAN

leans over the balustrade:

STRUAN
Lo Chum!

280

LO CHUM

appears below:

LO CHUM
Heya, Tai-Pan?

280 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Get doctor plenty very quick! Savvy?

LO CHUM (huffily)
Wat for you ask, heya? Doctor already here and gone never mind! Medicine al'ready cook never mind.

He stomps off. Struan goes back into the bedroom...

281

CULUM

is lying down, head pounding:

STRUAN
Listen, Culum.

CULUM
Later, please ---

Struan pulls him up, firmly:

STRUAN
If you value your life you'd better listen. It sounds as though you were given an aphrodisiac. And drugged - at the Club.

CULUM
What?

STRUAN
You distinctly remember the 'fire' there?

CULUM
Yes - but who'd do that? At the Club? Nonsense - that's impossible.

STRUAN
Say you've been with a girl who's diseased, eh? Say you were drugged - then deliberately put with a girl who had the pox.

Culum is rocked into total consciousness. And panic:

CULUM
You're just trying to frighten me!

STRUAN
By the Lord God, my son, I am not.

CULUM
There's no cure for the pox!

281 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Yes - once it settles - but the Chinese have medicines to clean the poisons out of you. If - if there's no sign in four days - then you're all right, with joss.

CULUM (near hysteria)
'Deliberately' - who ---- who? You're just trying to frighten me!

STRUAN
I'm not.
(kindly)
Listen, lad. You'll drink the medicines. You'll tell no one! If your joss's right - you'll be wiser that's all.

CULUM
But -- but -- Tess, oh my God, I'll have to tell Tess!

STRUAN (harshly)
YOU'LL TELL NO ONE. You think Brock'll allow you to wed Tess if he hears you're so immature to go alone, drunk, and unprotected to an unknown house where you're drugged?

Culum stares up at him - stretched to the limit of his being. A knock on the door. Lo Chum comes in:

LO CHUM
Long skirt Mass'er down stair!

Struan hurries out of the room. Culum stares after him.

CUT TO:

IN THE PALACE RECEPTION ROOM - VALERIAN GUINEPPA, BISHOP OF MACAO 282

is seated in a throne -like chair in the rich, huge surroundings. Struan tries to keep his face calm and his hope under control. Fine crystal glasses with madeira:

VALERIAN
Two things senhor: first there is no cinchona bark here in Macao. But I believe there is some at our mission in Kwang-Tao.

STRUAN
I'll send a man immediately. Where's Kwang-Tao?

282
CONT'D
(2)

VALERIAN
A Chinese courier left at dawn with orders to make record time... in this we would be faster - even than you.

STRUAN
How long will he take?

VALERIAN
Six days.
(Struan begins to talk, but:)
Second: word has just arrived from Europe that your Cabinet has repudiated your Treaty - has repudiated Hong Kong - that His Excellency Longstaff is replaced by a Sir Clyde Whalen who will arrive imminently with orders to 'open'- by any means - at least five mainland ports, forthwith.

Struan stares at him blankly:

STRUAN
They couldn't be that stupid!

VALERIAN
I'm afraid they have been. I thought you would like to know - privately.

STRUAN (tries to collect his wits)
When will this man - Whalen - arrive?

VALERIAN
Imminently. That's all we know, senhor.

STRUAN
Why tell me? You must know the value to me of such advance knowledge.

VALERIAN GUINEPPA rings a tiny bell and the door is immediately opened by a liveried servant:

VALERIAN
Perhaps we do not wish further war - any more than you. Perhaps you can help avoid it. Go with God senhor.

STRUAN
The six days for the bark. It has to be less. Another fever's due in two days.

282 CONT'D (3)

VALERIAN (his fingers play with the crucifix)
We hear she's young and strong - she should last two more bouts, with the Grace of God.

STRUAN
She's four months with child.

A heavy silence. The Bishop is very concerned:

VALERIAN
Perhaps the bark will arrive early. If it is the will of God.

CUT TO:

A DAWNING OVER MACAO AND ITS CHURCHES 283

and the bells toll - and mix with matins from the cathedral. Far below, Culum is following Lo Chum through the deserted streets - leaving the European quarter and going deeper into the Chinese section. CAMERA goes down to them as Lo Chum leads the way through a narrow cobbled street and stops outside a battered door. The door is opened by Lim Dim. Culum enters and Lo Chum pads back...

IN THE WALLED GARDEN - CULUM 284

hesitates almost bewildered by the sudden beauty. He has aged - grown up perhaps. Thinner. Lim Dim motions to the far end of the walled garden, then goes back into the house. Chinese architecture - ancient and well kept. Culum walks the path and turns a corner...

STRUAN 285

is seated near a small waterfall. A tiny water wheel. Delicate lillies. Beautiful and serene. But Struan's face is stretched and lined. Greatly so...

CULUM 286

hesitates again, seeing the depth to his father's sadness:

CULUM
You wanted to see me?

It takes Struan a long time to come back into the sadness that is all of him:

STRUAN
Yes. How are you, lad?

286
CONT'D
(2)

CULUM
All right. Thank you for helping me, father. How is she?

STRUAN
She lost the baby. In the night. She's very weak. She won't survive another fever.
(sighs, concentrates on Culum)
But your joss's better. It's the fifth day, isn't it?
(Culum nods. Almost musing:)
I know what it's been like - the waiting. When I first came out here - Jin-qua found me in a gutter in the Chinese quarter and got me a Chinese doctor. That's how I met him - why he's always been my friend.
(sighs)
Maybe I was never near the pox - or you - who knows?

He lets himself drift into his misery and when he can stand the silence no longer, he hands Culum a letter:

STRUAN
I want you to go to Hong Kong. Urgently. Give this to Skinner - leave on the tide. I'll put Orlov under your orders.

CULUM
All right.

STRUAN
Return here at once - you needn't wait for an answer and don't go ashore at Hong Kong. Send for him.

CULUM (strangely)
Gorth returns tonight. Is that why you're sending me away?

STRUAN
You and Tess - I hope you're not thinking of taking your lives in your own hands - not waiting the three months.

CULUM
Of course not - that's impossible - no one'd marry us.

STRUAN
Just as well, Brock'd be furious and rightly. You'd better hurry, lad.

286 CONT'D (3)

Struan seems to drift again. After a pause:

CULUM
You'll put Orlov under my orders?

STRUAN
Not as far as seamanship's concerned. But in all other matters you'll be Master of China Cloud. Why?

CULUM
Nothing.

He turns and leaves. Struan watches the waterfall.

CUT TO:

287 GORTH COMES CHARGING INTO THE CLUB THAT NIGHT

like a mad bull - a cat o'nine tails in his hand. Traders scatter out of his way. Large, vast foyer and rooms off and a staircase:

GORTH
Where's Struan?

BRYAN
I think he's in the gaming room.

Gorth whirls around and slams a door open...

288 THE GAMING ROOM

is low ceilinged. Billiards. Gaming tables - roulette, cards, dice. Smokey - filled with players. An astonished silence as they look at Gorth. They scatter as he slams up to Struan who sits tired - but imperturbably - at a table:

GORTH
Where's Tess, you son of a bitch!

A gasp runs through the room:

STRUAN
If you call me that again I'll kill you.

Gorth grabs him and - to the astonishment of all - Struan allows Gorth to jerk him to his feet, playing Gorth like a fish:

GORTH
Is she aboard China Cloud?

STRUAN
I don't know.

288 CONT'D (2)

GORTH
You planned it! You tol' Orlov t' marry them! Now our Tess's married to a pox ridden rake. I'll kill him. After you!

Struan forces himself out of Gorth's grip, leading him on:

STRUAN
Why provoke me? Why threaten Culum?

GORTH
He's poxed - everyone knowed it! He's been t'Chinatown drunk! You knowed it and that's why they've gone - you son of a bitch - afore it showed terrible. You're both dead men, by God!

Gorth slashes with the cat, almost beserk with rage. Struan ducks most of the blow, then hurls himself at Gorth and then there is a melee as the traders pull them apart and a lamp crashes over and Cooper stamps out the flames. Gorth is held by four men and still tries to get at Struan...

289 STRUAN

watches strangely: Then, softly:

STRUAN
Let him go, lads.

The traders obey - not of their own volition. Gorth goes for his knife. A knife appears in Struan's fist as if by magic - and for a moment he let's Gorth see all the primeval killing lust consuming him. Gorth skids to a stop - all his senses screaming danger:

STRUAN
This's no place to fight. This duel's not of my choosing. But I've no option.
(to Cooper)
You'll be my second?

COOPER
I'd be honoured, Tai-Pan.

GORTH
Choose your weapons, you son of a whorewhelp bitch.

STRUAN
Fighting irons.

Another gasp runs through the room. Struan walks out - Cooper and Bryan follow... 289 CONT'D (2)

IN THE FOYER - COOPER 290

stops Struan, drops his voice:

COOPER (uneasily)
Tai-Pan, he's very strong. And this last week's taken more out of you than you think.

BRYAN
I agree - a bullet between the eyes is neater, much neater.

STRUAN
I don't want Gorth neat - from tomorrow he won't see again, won't feed himself again, walk - or bed again. I'll show him what vengeance is.

He stalks off. After uneasy pause:

BRYAN
Did you hear the rumor that Culum was poxed?

COOPER
Yes.

BRYAN (shudders)
Poor lad.

COOPER
Poor Tess - if it's true.

CUT TO:

MAY-MAY - IN HER HOUSE - EARLY EVENING 291

is propped in bed - very pale, frail, but a magic to her welcome. She forces herself calm and wills away her exhaustion. The Amah, Duncan asleep in her arms, is with her. She gets up, bows to Struan. He smiles at the child. She leaves:

MAY-MAY
Hello Tai-Pan, your old mother's very fond of you.

He kisses her gently. Tenderly. Tucks her up:

STRUAN
Time to sleep now. I'm going to stay at the residence tonight. How do you feel?

291 CONT'D (2)

MAY-MAY
Fantastical. Tired, but very gracious good. Don't go for a minute.
(a little frown)
You have bad news?

Struan shakes his head and sits in the bamboo chair. The bedroom is bizarre, in Chinese fashion. May-may says something to Ah Sam who nods and exits - then she studies him once more knowing something is wrong:

MAY-MAY
Don't worry, Tai-Pan, your magic bark will come tomorrow - then all will be terrifical again.

STRUAN
Yes.

She glances at the doorway. A lovely smile. Struan follows her look...

YIN-HSI 292

stands at the doorway. She is perhaps twenty - alabaster - beautiful - her hair coiffured exquisitely. A pretty smile and graceful bow:

MAY-MAY
This is Yin-hsi. She is my sister.

STRUAN
I didn't know you had one, lassie.

MAY-MAY
She's not really my sister, Tai-Pan. Chinese ladies often call each other sister - it's a politeness. Yin-hsi's your birthday present.

STRUAN
Eh?

MAY-MAY
I bought her for your birthday.

STRUAN
Have you taken leave of your senses?

MAY-MAY (tearfully)
Oh, Tai-Pan, you are very trying sometimes. Your birthday is monthses away and then I would have been heavy with child so I buyed her for you and was going to teach her but now I give her to you and not wait.

292
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN
You don't buy girls for presents! Please don't cry lassie, don't ---

MAY-MAY
She's very nice and I want her for my sister.

Yin-hsi hurries from the doorway and nestles beside May-may and tries to gentle her. Struan watches helplessly:

MAY-MAY
Look Tai-Pan, see how pretty she is. You like her surely?

STRUAN
Of course I like her.

MAY-MAY
Then it's settled.

STRUAN
It's not settled.

May-may lays back in the bed, the argument sapping most of her precious energy - she knows it and Struan - and summons a final broadside:

MAY-MAY
It is and I'll no argue with you, by God! I search and Gordon Chen search, and I pays huge monies for her and she's the bestest and I can't send her away or she'll lose face and have to hang herself. Everyone knows I was lookings for a new sister for me and for you.

STRUAN
Don't cry, May-may. Listen ---

MAY-MAY
But you don't like my present and I don't want her hanged.

STRUAN (anything to stop her)
I like her and we'll not send her away. We'll --- we'll keep her and find her a husband, eh? She can stay.

May-may lies back and tries to stop her pounding heart. Too much strain - but worth the strain. A little smile now:

MAY-MAY
Good. She can stay. Thank you very graciously, Tai-Pan.

292 CT. (3)

She closes her eyes, slips exhaustedly into a deep sleep. Yin-hsi smooths May-may's brow, so concerned. She glances up at Struan - a tentative little smile. But he just sees May-may, overwhelmed by her. He touches her gently - then walks out. Yin-hsi settles herself closer to May-may, caressing her.

CUT TO:

LATER THAT NIGHT - THE BOLT ON THE GARDEN WALL GATE 293

is slammed back violently by Ah Sam to allow Gordon Chen - Lim Din anxiously puffing by his side - to rush into the house...

MAY-MAY 294

is grey faced - propped in bed, Yin-hsi in attendance. She welcomes Gordon Chen tiredly, her voice very weak, the night warm - the window open:

MAY-MAY (formally)
Thank you for being so fast, my son.

GORDON CHEN (very concerned)
It is my duty, Great Lady.

A wave of her hand and she dismisses Yin-hsi, Ah Sam, and Lim Din - to their covered annoyance. Gordon Chen nods gravely at Yin-hsi:

GORDON CHEN
The Tai-Pan approved of our choice?

MAY-MAY
Yes. It is best we speak softly and in English - they are sure to be listening. The Tai-Pan is in great danger.

GORDON CHEN
Yes. I heard. But he can kill that devil.

MAY-MAY
He cannot - not tomorrow. His strength is very low, very low. And his spirit. You must assassin Gorth tonight.

Gordon Chen is almost shocked out of his skin:

GORDON CHEN
That's impossible! Murder him and the whole of the English community will fall on us! One of their leading citizens murdered by assassins? The English, the Portuguese - even the mandarins - would never rest - they'd never rest till they caught us.

294 CONT'D (2)

MAY-MAY
You must kill him tonight. You must arrange it.

GORDON CHEN
It's too great a risk. Nothing would save us from stupid English vengeance. If the Tai-Pan found out he would give me to be hanged - and even you --- you know what insane respect he has - all these English have for 'law and order'.

MAY-MAY
You must do this for your father.

GORDON CHEN
I can't.

MAY-MAY
Please - I beg you.

GORDON CHEN (sweating)
I will not. Not tonight. It's too much risk! This would require a lot of time and fantastical planning and delicacy to do it safely. I can't arrange it safely in a few hours. I won't do it.

May-may thinks for a moment, grey-faced. Then she decides and her fingers find the jade locket around her neck. She opens the secret back to it and...moves over to Gordon Chen, opens. In it is one of Jin-qua's half coins...

GORDON CHEN 295

stares at it, with utter fascination and gasps:

GORDON CHEN
The four coins! Then the rumour's true.
(incredulously)
Where'd <u>you</u> get it?

MAY-MAY
I will give it to you if you assassin Gorth tonight.

GORDON CHEN
Where did you get it, Great Lady?

MAY-MAY
This gives you power over The Noble House - you or your son or your son's son. For one risk.

The sweat beads his forehead. She summons the remains of her will CT. to stop the great weariness sweeping over her as she replaces the (2) coin. A little shudder wracks her, her eyes close. Gordon Chen wipes the sweat off his brow, in turmoil:

MAY-MAY (her voice incredibly thin)
Go now - but please to close the windows. It's so cold.

He stares at her, suddenly frightened. For the night is warm.

CUT TO:

IN THE FOYER OF STRUAN'S RESIDENCE - THE SINGLE LANTERN 296

casts a long shadow beside the front door. The huge grandfather clock chimes three o'clock. Then the iron knocker sends reverberations throughout the house. A moment and then Lo Chum, sleepy-eyed, carrying a lantern heads for the door, opens it. A gaunt doctor-monk stands there, ill at ease, FATHER SEBASTIAN - his habit stained with chemicals as are his hands:

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Tai-Pan, see me, can?

Lo Chum hesitates. Then the hackles on the priest's neck rise and his fright increases as Struan's voice comes down from the darkness:

STRUAN'S VOICE
Yes?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Mr. Struan? His Grace sent me. We've got the cinchona bark.

STRUAN'S VOICE
Where is it?
(the monk holds up a small dirty bag)
And the price?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
His Grace said nothing about a price -just told me to treat anyone you'd take me to.

CUT TO:

STRUAN COMES DOWN THE STAIRS OUT OF THE DARKNESS 297

a fighting iron in his hands. The priest flinches - frightened by Struan and frightened with his responsibility:

297 CONT'D (2)

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I must tell you Mr. Struan - none of us have ever used cinchona before. We don't know how much to use - how often to give the 'tea'. We treat her at your risk.

Struan, nods, opens the door and runs down the steps...

ON THE PRAYA 298

under a dim moon, they hurry up a street. Then some sixth sense warns Struan and he ducks into an abutment and the musket ball splashes into the wall. Another shot and another. Struan pulls the petrified priest to safety for a moment. Then:

STRUAN
Come on - run for your life!

He pulls the monk - protecting him - across the road into an alleyway then cuts into another alleyway and stops. Sounds of running feet in the darkness, Gorth and some seamen briefly seen...

STRUAN 299

heads into another alley and again stops. No sound now:

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Who - who was it?

STRUAN (after grim pause)
Highwaymen.

CUT TO:

LIM DIN OPENS THE WALL DOOR OF MAY-MAY'S HOUSE 300

admits Struan and Father Sebastian. Lim Din bolts the door after them:

STRUAN
Before we start, father, swear by the Cross you'll tell no one about this house - who's in it - or what happens here.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Surely that's not necessary.

STRUAN
Swear or I'll treat her myself. It seems I know as much about cinchona as you do.

The monk licks his lips nervously. Then:

300 CONT'D (2)

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I swear by the Cross my lips are sealed. Amen.

Struan leads the way into the house...

301

THE HOUSE FOYER

is pleasant and airy. He puts down the fighting iron. Ah Sam, her face puffy with sleep, stares at Struan, bows tentatively. Struan heads down a corridor into the...

302

KITCHEN QUARTERS

which are small, dirty. Smoke grimed walls. Charcoal brazier and pots and pans and bunches of herbs - sausages, entrails, dried fish, mushrooms, bags of rice. Two sleep-doped cook-amahs stare at Struan groggily. When he carelessly sweeps pans off the table to make a space, they leap from their bunks and vanish into the back garden. Ah Sam watches wide-eyed:

AH SAM
Tea Mass'er?

He pays her no heed and opens the bag. The bark is ordinary - just brown and dirty and ordinary. He sniffs it - no odour:

STRUAN
What now?

The priest picks up a fairly clean pot - his hands filthy:

FATHER SEBASTIAN
We brew the bark.

STRUAN
We'll clean it first. Please wash your hands.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
What?

STRUAN
Please. It's an old Chinese custom - to wash before seeing the sick. And clean cups and teapot're supposed to make the tea more wholesome - so why not this. Please.

He points at soap and water and Father Sebastian sighs and begins to wash. Struan begins to scour the pot.

CUT TO:

A CLEAN TEAPOT AND LITTLE CUP 303

are set down by Struan on a bedroom table. He cleans the cup again with a clean handkerchief, fills it. He tastes the tea, grimaces. The priest is sweating with anxiety. May-may is in a fever coma, her teeth chattering:

STRUAN
It's very bitter.

Then he holds on to his fear and helps May-may up and holds the cup to her lips. She gags at the awful taste - can't get it down. He encourages her and she gulps some, gasps and it almost comes up again. Ah Sam, Yin-hsi watch with vast interest. May-may lies back nauseated and almost gagging, shivering from the ice in her veins:

FATHER SEBASTIAN
His Grace remembers it was very bitter - that he could hardly keep it down. That he had to take it for two or three days.

He takes her pulse. Hardly feels it, it is so weak. Then he kneels down, still holding her hand. And begins to wait.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER CUP - A BIGGER CUP 304

is brought to her chattering lips:

MAY-MAY
Please - Tai-Pan - I beg you no more -- please...

STRUAN'S VOICE
Come on lassie - then you can sleep.

He forces her to drink. It stays down. She lies back exhausted and helpless. He strokes her so tenderly:

FATHER SEBASTIAN'S VOICE
This pot's finished. I'll make some more.

STRUAN'S VOICE
No - I'll do it. You watch her.

Ah Sam and Yin-hsi are curled up asleep. Struan takes a last look at May-may - then goes out.

CUT TO:

MORE OF THE CINCHONA BREW IS POURED INTO A FRESH TEAPOT 305

by Struan. Through the open doorway of the kitchen the dawn streaks the sky and lights the room. He is very tired now. Startled he jerks around...

FATHER SEBASTIAN, 306

stands in the doorway. Almost near tears. Struan is aghast:

STRUAN
She's dead?

FATHER SEBASTIAN (awed)
No. The fever's dead, Mr. Struan. Bark from Peru has cured mal-aria from Hong Kong. How astonishing are the ways of God! The fever's dead.

Struan leans back against the table. Then walks out...

STRUAN 307

comes into the bedroom and looks down at May-may. She is sleeping soundly. Pathetically frail and wan - but sleeping softly. He turns out the lamp - dawn lights the room:

STRUAN
Will the fever return?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Perhaps - I don't think so - she should take the brew for two-three days more. Say twice a day.

STRUAN
She'll be all right?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I don't know - I think so - with care - God willing. Keep her very gentle - no upsets - no traumas - she's still very weak. Very, very weak.

STRUAN (makes sure she's all right. Then:)
I've got to go now. Will you watch her till I get back?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Yes. Go with...
(pause)
I cannot bless your going - it's to a killing, isn't it?

Struan picks up the fighting iron that is on the chest:

STRUAN
Man is born to die, Father. I just try to protect myself and mine as best I know - and try to choose the time of my own dying.

He walks out...

IN THE GARDEN - DAWN - STRUAN 308

stops for moment, eases the ache in his back. He's very tired. He knows he's no match for Gorth now:

STRUAN
Well...she's safe anyway.

CUT TO:

GORTH - AS HE LEAVES THE HOUSE 309

in the Chinese quarter. Low ramshackled dwellings and tall ones. Cobbled stones - a few coolies watch him, squatting in doorways. Dogs scavenge. Gorth's stride is long and confident. He feels his great strength and welcomes the dawn.

CUT TO:

TRADERS - NEAR THE PICTURESQUE GROTTO AT DAWN 310

are chattering amongst themselves about the duel - Cooper amongst them. The trees and plants are lush and pleasant and gentle. The traders stop talking and look off...

STRUAN 311

shoves thru them. He looks around for Gorth - Gorth isn't there yet. McKay, his Bosun, is nearby:

STRUAN
Guard my back, McKay.

McKAY
Aye aye sor.

Watched by the others he lies on a bench and goes to sleep:

BRYAN
He's inhuman.

COOPER (grave)
No - just tired. Gorth'll kill him.

WEDMAN (a Gorth crony - vulgar and fat)
And good riddance! You're not going to welch on your bet are you, Yankee?

COOPER
Shut your face, Wedman, you fat slob!

Wedman backs off, frightened.

CUT TO:

GORTH TURNS THE CORNER OF AN ALLEY 312

into another one. Suddenly running feet and a spear slams at him, just missing him and he grabs at it as another stabs for him and all bystanders vanish...

THE FIVE CHINESE ASSASSINS 313

ring him - all armed with spears - fighting axes at their belts. Gorth roars like a mad bull and charges at them, his knife out and he twists like a wildcat and grabs one of them, using him as a shield and a spear impales the man, snaps off...

ANOTHER ASSASSIN 314

hurls his axe and Gorth ducks and it just misses and slams into the wooden fence and again the spearmen charge. Gorth feints and slips under a spear and guts one of them viciously, grabs the spear and impales another...

BUT A SPEAR 315

catches him in the stomach and shoves him against the wall. Roaring with rage and pain he tries to fight the spear out but...

ANOTHER ASSASSIN 316

charges and cruelly slams the spear home. Gorth's roar of pain is cut short...

GORTH 317

makes a last mute effort to get at his murderers, then dies. The two unhurt men catch their breath. The gutted man is moaning in agony and the one with the haft of a broken spear in him is still alive. The last is dead. Sound of running booted feet...

A PORTUGUESE PATROL OF SOLDIERS 318

is hurrying around a far corner...

THE TWO ASSASSINS 319

stare off aghast. One takes out his axe and hacks at a wounded man. The moans cease. Then he hacks at the other but does not kill him and...

THE PATROL 320

is racing forward...

THE TWO ASSASSINS 321

take to their heels and disappear into an alley. The Patrol follow but the officer, CAPTAIN MACHADO, a young lithe Portuguese, shakes his head wearily, goes over to examine Gorth's body. One of the assassins moans in agony - still alive.

CUT TO:

STRUAN AND OTHER TRADERS IN THE ALLEY 322

stare down at Gorth's body. Faces mixed, most horrified - all angry. Struan can hardly control his relief. CAPTAIN MACHADO studies him:

MACHADO
It seems no honour is to be satisfied, Senhor Struan.

STRUAN
No.

MACHADO
A curious death.
(turns the body of an assassin over with his toe)
Before this one died, he said he was a member of a Hong Kong secret society - that he was ordered to assassinate Gorth Brock. It seems you have many enemies, Senhor. He claims Gordon Chen was their leader.

STRUAN
Ridiculous!

MACHADO (blandly)
We agree. And the Chinese authorities. They were about to 'lodge a complaint' against Gorth Brock.
(distastefully)
It seems he --- destroyed a girl in a house a few days ago in this area. Perhaps it was just a vengeance killing. We will, of course, have to make an official report to His Excellency.

STRUAN
I'll offer a reward. For proof of the why and the who. A thousand guineas.

WEDMAN
You're right lucky, Tai-Pan, right lucky.

STRUAN
His blood's not on my hands.

CUT TO:

VALERIAN GUINEPPA WALKS THRU THE CLOISTERS 323

in the afternoon sun, a small briefcase under his arm. He stops, seeing Struan in the garden, sitting in the sunshine. Struan is rested and shaved and clean - a strange serenity about him. Valerian frowns - loathe to disturb him. Then:

STRUAN
Oh - hello, Your Grace.

VALERIAN
What were you seeing, senhor?

STRUAN
Seeing? Nothing - I was just looking at your garden. Enjoying it. Enjoying life - I don't know.

VALERIAN (after pause)
I think you were close to God - I envy you.

STRUAN
No - just happy to be alive and in a lovely garden on a beautiful day.

VALERIAN
You wished to see me?

STRUAN
I'm sending a ship to Peru - to get cinchona and to find out how to harvest it - everything about it. With your permission Father Sebastian could go with her. We share the cargo and the knowledge equally. I'd like him - under your authority - to write a medical paper for the Lancet on your successful treatment of mal-aria. You've done an incredible thing - the world should know about it. And bless you for it.

VALERIAN
We've done nothing - it was the will of God, senhor. I will send someone with the ship. You're very generous.
(quietly)
I'm glad you came today because I have just been asked to give you this prudently. It seems that certain diplomatic authorities are 'privately' concerned with the Archduke Zorgeyev's presence in Asia - and his death.

STRUAN
The Church authorities?

323
CONT'D
(2)

VALERIAN
No.

STRUAN
Why am I given diplomatic information? And about Hong Kong?

VALERIAN
Aren't you the Tai-Pan? Don't forget, senhor, Portugal and Britain are ancient allies. Britain has been a good friend to Portugal, and it is perhaps wise for friends to help each other, no? Goodbye, senhor.

STRUAN
Just a moment, your Grace. We didn't fix the price. For the bark. Will you please tell me the price?

VALERIAN
Nothing, senhor.

STRUAN
I don't understand.

VALERIAN
There's no price for a handful of bark to cure one person.

STRUAN
Of course there's a price. I said twenty thousand in bullion. I'll send you a draft.

VALERIAN (patiently)
I will just return it. I want no payment.

STRUAN
I'll endow a church - a monastery if you wish - in Hong Kong. A trade is a trade - I'm in your debt.

VALERIAN (gently)
You owe me nothing. You owe the Church nothing. But you owe God very much.

He raises his hand and makes the sign of the cross:

VALERIAN
Go with God, senhor.

He walks off. Struan frowns - looks at the briefcase.

CUT TO:

THE EMPTY BRIEFCASE ON AN ORNATE DESK 324

and many closely written documents and maps scattered nearby. Late afternoon sunshine slants thru the window overlooking Macao harbour. Struan picks up a map, awed. A signal cannon from the harbour below. He goes to the window...

CHINA CLOUD 325

heading for her moorings.

CUT TO:

NEAR THE WHARF - STRUAN 326

is heading for his cutter:

LIZA'S VOICE
I'm going with you.

LIZA 327

walks forward ponderously, her face stretched with worry, hard-put to contain her hatred. As they walk down the steps:

STRUAN
Of course. You're welcome.

LIZA
I'm taking Gorth's body back to Hong Kong. Day after tomorrow.

He nods, focuses the binoculars on the ship...

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS - CULUM AND TESS 328

are on the quarterdeck. Laughing and happy and gay - but a little tense as they peer shorewards - his arm around her. Orlov is on the quarterdeck also, supervising the ship...

STRUAN 329

hands Liza the binoculars. She focuses - her face closes.

CUT TO:

TESS AND CULUM ABOARD CHINA CLOUD 330

are tense but gloriously happy. Liza and Struan come on deck but before Culum and Tess can greet them:

LIZA
Did you marry them, Orlov?

330
CONT'D
(2)

ORLOV (to Struan)
You put me under his orders. The Master is the Master - that's your law.

LIZA (to Struan)
Then it was deliberate! You planned this!

CULUM
No, Mrs. Brock. It was my idea. I ordered him to. I did.

LIZA
Are you poxed?

CULUM (aghast)
Of course not. You think I'd marry Tess if I was?

LIZA
I pray God you're telling the truth - Tess, you come with me!

CULUM
She'll go - go nowhere. She'll stay with me. We're married before God and I'll try to be the best son-in-law...

TESS
Oh mumma.....

She runs into Liza's arms. Both of them in tears now:

LIZA
I'll - I'll have to send word to Tyler. About this and about - about poor Gorth.
(bursts out)
Why didn't you leave things be, Tai-Pan? Three months weren't much to ask?

STRUAN (after pause, to Orlov)
I'll be leaving for Hong Kong in two hours.

ORLOV
Aye aye, Tai-Pan.

CULUM
What about Gorth?

CUT TO:

MAY-MAY'S FINGERS 331

open the secret back of the jade locket and take out the half coin. Her fingers hold it a moment, then offer it. Gordon Chen's fingers, trembling a little, reach out and delicately take it...

GORDON CHEN 332

studies the coin, May-may watching him. She is in bed, very gentle, too frail. She wears fresh clothes and flowers in her hair - greatly at peace:

GORDON CHEN
You're a granddaughter of Jin-qua, aren't you, Great Lady?
(May-may says nothing)
Why else would you have a coin. If not for protection - you and your children against any eventuality.

She toys with the locket, at peace with the world. He sighs, then firmly puts it back on the coverlet:

GORDON CHEN
I can't take it, Great Lady.

MAY-MAY (astonished)
Wat?

GORDON CHEN (simply)
I don't want payment for doing what it was my duty to do.

MAY-MAY
But we had a bargain!

GORDON CHEN
Yes. But I'm my father's son and not all Chinese. In this I must be European.

May-may stares at him with disbelief, then shakes her head weakly as she replaces the coin:

MAY-MAY
I' swear to gods, Gordon Chen, your adulterating barbarian blood is mad. And you have the bestest Chinese in you.
(deliberately)
Jin-qua's your grandfather.

GORDON CHEN (rocked)
Mother said the Tai-Pan bought her out of a house.

MAY-MAY'S FINGERS 331

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332 CONT'D (2)

MAY-MAY (gently)
Isn't any home a house, Gordon Chen? Of course Jin-qua let the Tai-Pan believe that and she was sworn to secrecy as I was - but now you know about this...
(touching the locket)
...so you can know the rest, secretly. Why else would Jin-qua trade with one House and build it into The Noble House and save it - if not to control it? Why else would you have such a father chosen for you and I such a fantastical husband - why else would you get loans and now be in line to be compradore - if not because of family connections, heya?

GORDON CHEN (weakly)
I thought it was just because of the Tai-Pan and joss.

MAY-MAY
It is joss. Just joss.

A long silence. She drifts - almost into sleep:

GORDON CHEN
I will burn joss sticks and protect you as long as I have life.

Lim Din hurries past the open door, calls out softly:

LIM DIN
Tai-Pan - ahhhh!

Yin-hsi comes in and pretties May-may as Ah Sam tidies the bed. Gordon Chen gets up and stands by the window, trying to assimilate his new knowledge...

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND STRUAN 333

breezily crosses the foyer and enters the bedroom - young, light of foot and virile...

STRUAN'S SMILE 334

lights the room and there is a replying magic to May-may's:

STRUAN
Hello, lassie. Hello Gordon.

GORDON CHEN (bows)
It's so marvelous about the cinchona, Tai-Pan.

334
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN
Yes. What does a cure for mal-aria add up to?

GORDON CHEN
A service to mankind - and a fortune to whoever gets in first.

STRUAN
Good. I have to go back to Hong Kong immediately - I think....

A sudden anxious movement and May-may knocks over a cup of tea. Yin-hsi quickly cleans up the little mess as:

STRUAN (perturbed)
What's the matter, lassie?

MAY-MAY
Nothing, nothing, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
Gordon. I think you'd better come with me - there's a lot to do. Best get aboard at once.

GORDON CHEN
Yes, Tai-Pan.
(he bows to May-may)
God be with you, Great Lady.

Gordon Chen leaves. Struan concentrates on May-may. And Yin-hsi:

STRUAN
She's looking after you very well.

May-may translates. Yin-hsi smiles - bobs a little bow:

MAY-MAY
I start English lessons tomorrow. About going - please, Tai-Pan, wait till I'm well. Please - just a few days.

Struan is abruptly concerned by her flushed anxiety:

STRUAN
I'll only be a few days, lassie. It's very important.

MAY-MAY
Then take me with you - I am fantastical strong. I really am.

STRUAN
Quieten down, lassie, please. You're not strong and I'll only be a little while.

334
CONT'D
(3)

MAY-MAY
I do not want to be here - you there. Not much to ask, Tai-Pan, I swear I will stay in bed and eat and eat and drink the cups and be very gracious good. Please. I beg you.

Struan sits beside her and gentles her, very concerned for her. She holds on, trying to control herself - helpless:

STRUAN
All right. We'll go tomorrow - if you're better.

MAY-MAY
Oh, thank you Tai-Pan, I guarantee very better.

She holds his hand - hardly has the strength to lift it - too thin, too gaunt:

STRUAN
Ah, lassie, you're so beautiful.

MAY-MAY (a sudden glorious smile)
I think you're terrifical beautiful too.

CUT TO:

ABOARD HMS VENGEANCE IN HONG KONG HARBOUR - DAY - LONGSTAFF 335

waves the newspaper and slams it on his desk. The discreet 1841 headline (on the inner page) reads: CABINET REPUDIATES CHINA TRADERS. To Struan's thinly veiled amusement:

LONGSTAFF (exploding)
Ruined, Dirk - that's what I am - ruined! How the devil did that fat bastard Skinner lay his hands on a secret despatch I haven't even received yet?

STRUAN
You're sure it's true?

LONGSTAFF
Of course it's true - Skinner'd never dare publish it if it wasn't.
(jerks a finger at the stern windows and Hong Kong)
That cursed rock's the root of all my problems. It's destroyed us all. Damned nearly a riot yesterday. A deputation of traders demanded I leave Asia with the fleet and blockade the Port of London to demand the repudiation of the repudiation! The pox on everything - ruined - ruined - ruined.

335
CONT'D
(2)

STRUAN
All's not lost, Will. When you get home you can put your power to work.

LONGSTAFF
What?

STRUAN
Diplomats are permanent - governments change. Say you had the key to prove the cabinet wrong?

LONGSTAFF
A key, my dear fellow?

STRUAN
Some information of enormous value has fallen into my hands ---

A sudden commotion outside and the cabin door crashes open and Brock storms in, a hapless sentry trying to restrain him. Struan is ready to go for his knife, Brock flushed with rage:

BROCK
Are they wed?

STRUAN
Yes.

BROCK
Was Gorth murdered?

STRUAN
Yes.

BROCK
When's the White Witch due?

STRUAN
Tomorrow.

BROCK
First I'll talk to Liza - then the two - and then, by the Lord God, I'll be talking to you.

He storms out. The sentry weakly closes the door. Struan unwinds, rather like a cat will unwind once danger has passed:

LONGSTAFF
Ill-mannered sod - he might have at least knocked.
(absently)
We heard about your fracas with Gorth of course - bad news has the habit of travelling fast, doesn't it? What possessed those two to elope? You were saying - a key?

335
CONT'D
(3)

STRUAN

Yes.

(he puts his mind off Brock)

Maps showing the areas already taken by Russia in her hinterland - details of her march to the Pacific - documents to prove that our presence here is an irritant to His Majesty the Tsar - that at all costs China must be kept weak - that we must not be allowed to make a foothold here - particularly on an island fortress.

LONGSTAFF (awed)

There have never been maps of the hinterland, never. They've reached the Pacific?

STRUAN

Yes. They've already taken Mongolia and Siberia from China and they've most of central Asia swamped.

LONGSTAFF

But if this information is correct, it proves the Cabinet to be fools.

STRUAN

Yes - but they'll be out of power by the time you get home. Peel'll be Prime Minister.

LONGSTAFF

Impossible! Do you really think so?

STRUAN

These documents completely vindicate your Asian policy - and give you the ear of any Prime Minister.

LONGSTAFF (ecstatic)

I absolutely agree. And completely block any trouble with the Tsar over Zergeyev. You're superb - my dear fellow. Now - if I can have the papers...

(puts out his hand)

STRUAN

You'll get them before you leave. By the way - you should issue a Proclamation that henceforth Hong Kong is a free Port.

LONGSTAFF

Eh?

335 CONT'D (4)

STRUAN
To keep up confidence in the future of the island - and you'll be needing powerful friends. Here - and at home.

LONGSTAFF
Quite - quite right.
(anxiously)
The papers - you're sure they're correct?

STRUAN
Beyond question.

CUT TO:

STRUAN - IN HIS CABIN/BEDROOM ABOARD RESTING CLOUD 336

is heavily asleep. Yin-hsi opens the door, closes it. Then she steps out of her pyjamas and gets into bed. Struan does not stir. She moves a little, nearer him. No reaction. A little nearer. Then, in half sleep, an arm crosses over her. She waits - his warmth exciting - nestles closer. Her perfume touches him and her warmth. He half awakes, thinking it is May-may. Then his eyes jerk open. Yin-hsi smiles demurely:

STRUAN
What the devil're you doing here?

YIN-HSI
Supr'eem Ladey sen' me.

STRUAN
Eh?

YIN-HSI
Sup'reem Ladey sen' me.

STRUAN
May-may? Is she out of her head? I don't care who sent you - off you go.

He points at the door but all he gets for his trouble is a pout and Yin-hsi plants her head firmly on the pillow and glares at him:

YIN-HSI
Sup'reem Ladey sen' me!

He gives her a little shove but she grimly hangs onto the bed-clothes and keeps her head on the pillow. He laughs. She is even more bewildered. He lays back on his pillow and laughs again. Then he looks at her. And sees her for the first time. She smiles back, pleased with herself. And her victory.

CUT TO:

AT DAWN - THE WHITE WITCH 337

comes into port. One mast gone, rigging askew. The sky is cloud-covered and strange...

BROCK - ABOARD HIS HULK 338

pulls the spyglass from his eye, mottled with rage. Glances up at the sky.

CUT TO:

THE DECK CREW OF THE WHITE WITCH 339

are petrified as Brock stomps aboard. MICHAELMAS, the acting Captain is a cruel, hard man:

MICHAELMAS
'day sir. We run into squall, just out of Macao - almost turned us on our beam ends. Carried mast away...

BROCK (enraged)
Don't you know enough to watch for squalls in the typhoon season? To reef, eh?
(his finger stabs the sky)
Can't you see warnings?

MICHAELMAS
Don't blame me for muckricked squalls!

Brock's fist fells him, crashing him against the bulkhead:

BROCK
Get him off my ship! Pennyworth you're acting captain. Get this mess cleaned up.

Culum comes on deck. Obviously he's been seasick:

CULUM
Mr. Brock I want ---

BROCK
One more word before I'm ready and I'll grind you to dust.

He slams below.

CUT TO:

LIZA - IN THE MAIN CABIN 340

is in panic:

LIZA
I tell you it was Gorth! He called the Tai-Pan names and struck him in public. I told Gorth to wait - to get you - but he wouldn't.

She pulls the hair from covering her left ear - it is puffy and bruised:

LIZA
Look what he did to me! He was a proper devil and you know it.

Brock is shocked - but too far gone in rage:

BROCK
Is Culum poxed?

LIZA
No. He went to our doctor.
(trying to control)
Listen, Tyler: about Nagrek... Gorth told me what -- you did -- that was terrible but he was deserving it for he - he laid with Tess but -- but it weren't loving and Culum don't know so she's saved and we've to thank God. I hid it from you because I was afraid - for her and for you --- forgive them and don't go after Dirk. For the love of God!

Brock wipes the sweat out of his eyes. Then goes out...

TESS 341

at the cabin door is terrified. Culum has his arm around her. Their terror scourges Brock's rage deeper:

TESS
Hello Dad.

BROCK
You chose to run off like a cheap doxey. Very well - say goodbye to your Ma - you're ashore with your man and out of our lives.

TESS
But Dad, won't you ---

341 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
Get out of my sight.

She backs off. He whirls on Culum:

CULUM
Listen, Mr. Brock, I want ---

BROCK
You listen! I said to you fair, man to man, if three months was agreeable. You said yes and you've broke your word!
(slams)
Did you or didn't you?

CULUM
Yes. But ---

BROCK (overriding him)
A last question: Did he put elopement into your head? Knowing this'd make Gorth beserk? So's he could challenge him openly? Did you go to a house, drunk - not knowing where you were, with whom you were?
(angrily)
The answer's written in your face!

CULUM
But Mr. Brock. You've got to listen...

BROCK
I'll tell you fair - Culum godrotting Struan: I'm after The Noble House. I'm after your Dad. I'll never rest till they're broke. Now you're only safe harbour's in Brock and Sons. Till that day you're both dead before my face.

He storms off. Culum stares after him helplessly...

BROCK COMES ON DECK

342

and the crew scatter - those within reach:

BROCK
Pennyworth!

The tall, lean Mate comes forward cautiously:

PENNYWORTH
Aye?

342 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
Find Struan - take him a message.

CUT TO:

343

ABOARD RESTING CLOUD - MAY-MAY

is propped in bed - guant still, but mending very fast. A sparkle to her. Ah Sam is tidying, chattering. Struan enters. Also a sparkle to him. Ah Sam leaves:

MAY-MAY
So.

STRUAN
So.

MAY-MAY
Where's my sister?

STRUAN
'Sup'reem Ladee sen' meee'.

MAY-MAY (happily)
You're just lustful mendacity - you don't adore your old mother anymore.

STRUAN
True - I think I'll pack you off.

MAY-MAY
Ayeeyah! See if I care, never mind.

He laughs and lifts her into his arms. Kisses her happily:

MAY-MAY
I'm so pleased you enjoyed Yin-hsi. - I can tell.

STRUAN
How would you like to be Tai-tai?

For a second her heart stops and her breathing:

STRUAN
Well, if you're not interested that's the last we'll say about it.

MAY-MAY
You mean Tai-tai? Real Tai-tai? According to customs? You're not teasing? Please don't tease about such importance.

STRUAN
I'm not teasing. We'll leave at the end of the year. Marry en route.

343
CONT'D
(2)

MAY-MAY
Wat's 'en rout'?

STRUAN
On the way. To England.

MAY-MAY (after
glorious pause)
Let me go a moment Tai-Pan.

He sets her on the bed. Then shakily, she kowtows:

MAY-MAY
I swear I will be worthy Tai-tai.

STRUAN (lifts her up)
Don't do that, lassie. Please.

MAY-MAY
I must. You give me so much face
I busted.
(so happily)
Heya! My birthday present - that
is why Tai-tai, heya?

STRUAN
Yes and no - it's just the thought.

MAY-MAY
I'm very gracious glad you like her.
She was a concubine of a mandarin
who died. His Tai-tai asked a marriage
broker to find her a very best home.
Gordon Chen was the go-between. He
works very hard on your behalf, Tai-Pan.
I like her hugely too. She is nice in
bed?

STRUAN
I didn't make love to her - if that's
what you're asking.

MAY-MAY
Wat?

STRUAN
Yes wat! I like to choose who's in
my bed and when.

MAY-MAY
I swear to God Tai-Pan you're
pekuliar.
(glorious smile)
Truly Tai-tai.

STRUAN
Truly.

She holds him tightly, so happily. A knock, Ah Sam pads in:

343 CONT'D (3)

AH SAM
Mass'er here, Tai-Pan. Mass'er Pennee'worth. See can?

CUT TO:

HAPPY VALLEY 344

is desolate. Strange cloud-locked sky presses down. Skeletons of buildings. Struan's deserted house. The giant factory - solid and brooding. The half completed church. Then a slight movement - Struan comes into the valley floor, begins to climb towards the knoll...

STRUAN 345

climbs cautiously. A fighting iron in his hand, knife at his belt. Then, very close, another fighting iron falls jangling into picture...

BROCK - ON THE KNOLL 346

steps out of the lee of the church - the wind tugging at him. The two men stop. Hatred on the knoll, swarming:

BROCK
You planned the elopement and the duel?

STRUAN
Yes. I'm sorry Gorth died the way he died. I'd've enjoyed killing him.

The only sound, the metallic jingling of the fighting irons - and the wind. Both men ease forward:

STRUAN
Tess's poxed!

BROCK
Doctor says Culum's clean.

STRUAN
Doctor's can be bought.. She was poxed deliberately!

Brock swings the fighting iron viciously and Struan ducks and hacks back and they begin to circle each other like animals - Struan almost at breaking point:

STRUAN
Gorth planned the pox. He did it. You hear?

Another vicious, cruel skirmish:

346 CONT'D (2)

BROCK
God curse your lies.

STRUAN
He spiked Culum's liquor - gave him an aphrodisiac - sent him drugged into Chinatown - murdered a girl there - that's the truth, before God.

BROCK
Blasphemer!

Another violent flurry of blows. Then Struan breaks and walks up the broken nave to the half completed altar:

STRUAN
Before God I swear it's the truth.

Then he turns - now done with talking. His voice roughens:

STRUAN
Through the grace of God Culum's not poxed - nor Tess. Gorth's blood's not on my hands. But yours will be.

Brock retreats as Struan comes towards him, his blood pounding:

BROCK
I take back what I said. You had cause -- you-had-just-cause - but that isn't settling our score....

The two men circle. Committed. Then abruptly Brock stops. Faces north. Astonished:

BROCK
Wind's changed!

The blood clears from Struan's eyes:

STRUAN
What?

BROCK
Wind's changed - north! A -- a squall perhaps.

STRUAN
Not from the north!

Both men jerk around, stare down at the harbour...

347 IN THE HARBOUR SAMPANS AND JUNKS

are scurrying for the lee shore...

348 BROCK AND STRUAN

watch - then try to read the sky - their whole beings shouting DANGER:

STRUAN
Typhoon!

Brock wipes the sweat out of his eyes and spits the bile out of his mouth:

BROCK
I'm apologizing for Gorth.

STRUAN
I accept. You'll forgive Culum and Tess?

BROCK
When I'm Tai-Pan of The Noble House.

Struan warily drops his fighting iron. Brock does likewise. They hurry down the hill - by separate paths.

CUT TO:

349 A SAMPAN - UNDER A LOWERING SKY

scurries into the mass of sampans collecting in a crude typhoon shelter below Glessing's Point. The Point is a hive of industry: a company of soldiers double time along Queen's Road heading for the Dockyard. Others are striking tents in the cantonment and piling them for safety in carts. Men and women are nailing shutters over the windows. Captain Glessing hurries along Queen's Road heading for his Harbour Master's Office. In the harbour, longboats hurry this way and that. All ships are being battened down and storm anchors are out - three on China Cloud and three on White Witch. The sea has thickened and the colour is dirty grey. Lowering clouds. Then the drizzle begins.

CUT TO:

350 AT STRUAN'S FACTORY IN HAPPY VALLEY - AT DUSK - A SHUTTER

is banging irritably. Gusts of wind and the sound of rain. Struan comes up, looks out at...

351 THE HARBOUR

which is rain-covered. Dull grey seas - no danger yet. The fleet and ships snug...

STRUAN 352

secures the shutter and tightly closes the window - bolts it. May-may is resting easily in a large chair, Yin-hsi and Ah Sam getting the room straightened out. Large fourposter. Walls very strong - beams. Struan goes over to the barometer he has hung on the wall, stares at it...

THE BAROMETER 353

reads 29.8. Steady....

STRUAN 354

frowns:

MAY-MAY
Up-down - like jack in the package! Wat for you keep staring at that Tai-Pan?

STRUAN
It's a barometer. It tells about the storm.

MAY-MAY
Better look out windows, heya?
(no smile from him)
Wat's the matter?

STRUAN (uneasily)
I don't know. There's never been a typhoon without the barometer dropping, or the wind backing or veering. Wind's steady north ---
(his knuckles rap the barometer)
---still steady 29.8.

MAY-MAY
Huh - foolishness! Be Chinese, Tai-Pan, I order you. Past is past - future is future. Today is now. Eat some foods - drink some tea and make love to Yin-hsi. I gave her a good talking to.

STRUAN
Eh?

MAY-MAY
I tell her how to excite you fantastical. Love in evening is good for soul never mind!

He smiles and she is happy and so is Yin-hsi. 354 CONT'D (2)

CUT TO:

THAT NIGHT - ABOARD WHITE WITCH - BROCK 355

peers out from the quarterdeck hatchway with a lantern. Rain thickening again. Clouds even heavier. Dirty sea. He taps the gimballed barometer. It still reads steady. Morosely he goes below...

IN THE MAIN CABIN LIZA 356

is knitting. Lillibet playing with a doll. Brock comes in, throws off his heavy seacoat. Dull, depressed and spent:

LIZA
Best get into fresh clothes, luv.

BROCK
Aye. Barometer's steady.

LILLIBET
Will you play a game with me, Daddy?

LIZA
I'll play with you, leave him be.

BROCK
No - I'll play with you Lillibet, luv, then to bed.

The child doesn't notice his sadness. Nor Liza's.

CUT TO:

THE ENCRUSTING SHACKS OF TAI-PING-SHAN AT EARLY DAY 357

are like limpets on the rock. Higgledy-piggledy. Rain pours down - puddles everywhere. Heavy overcast. Struan passes on his way to the Harbour Master's office...

STRUAN 358

walks along - wind and rain strong but nothing to worry about. Light storm clothes. Sedan chair and coolies run hurriedly passed. Umbrellas. A sedan chair hurries up to Struan. Gordon Chen gets out - distraught. They shelter in the lee of a building:

GORDON CHEN
Tai-Pan! This news - the repudiation of Hong Kong. We're ruined!

358 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
There're a few minor problems - but they'll be settled. This island's British - permanently.

GORDON CHEN
But the Treaty's repudiated and if ----

STRUAN
Don't worry, lad. That damned fool Government will be out of office within the year. Your loan's doubled - buy and build, we'll make a fortune.

GORDON CHEN (weakly)
Doubled?

STRUAN
Yes. I hear you're head of a secret society here.

Gordon Chen controls his sudden panic - just:

GORDON CHEN
A joke - surely a joke, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
Of course. One of Gorth's assassins accused you, before he died, also of ordering the murder.

Gordon Chen covers his almost-heart attack as best he can:

GORDON CHEN
Terrible to have such enemies. Terrible. Why should I do that? Through you I become rich. Risk that?
(his eyes roll up in horror)
For the death of one man. Why should I be so foolish?

STRUAN
Why indeed? If I were you I'd not go back to Macao - lot of bad people there.
(breezily)
Well, come and see me after the storm. Where are you staying?

GORDON CHEN
I have a cellar under my house, Tai-Pan.

358 CONT'D (3)

STRUAN
Good. Oh, by the way, though, your taste is excellent, any 'buying' in future, I'll do myself.

GORDON CHEN
Of course.

Struan claps him on the shoulder - friendly - goes into the Harbour Master's office. Gordon Chen stares after him with mixed feelings. Then he gets back into his sedan chair...

GLESSING - THE HARBOUR MASTER 359

looks up from his chart-filled desk. The large stone building has rooms off. Charts, signal flags, a huge mast comes thru the ceiling to be set in the floor:

GLESSING
'morning, Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
I thought Culum was here.

GLESSING
He and Mrs. Struan have gone to church - they'd be back in a moment.

STRUAN
I'd forgotten it was Sunday.

GLESSING
What do you make of the storm?

STRUAN (after pause)
If it's a typhoon - then we're dead in its path and the vortex will pass over us. If there is such a thing.

GLESSING (shudders)
God help us! Once I was caught off Formosa by the edge of a typhoon. Never want to be in a sea like that again.
(pours tea)
What about this balderdash that Hong Kong's repudiated? Stupid bastards at home - what the hell do they know? Look at the Harbour, eh? Where the devil we'd be today, eh, without Hong Kong? Stupid bastards!

The door opens and a gust of rain and wind comes in with Tess and Culum. They're flushed and happy: 359 CONT'D (2)

TESS/CULUM
Hello Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
You're looking very pretty, Mrs. Struan.

She blushes. Struan notices a little gold box hanging from Culum's fob:

STRUAN
Present?

TESS
It was my grandmother's. Not much of a wedding gift - but then, without a dowry, beggars can't be pickers.

STRUAN
You're part of The Noble House.
(their faces change slightly. After pause)
Will you change your minds? Come over to the residence?

CULUM
We're fine here, thank you, father.
(simply)
We gave thanks for the change in the wind.

GLESSING
Look at that fool!

A SMALL LORCHA 360

is barrelling in through the west channel, decks almost awash, sails reefed...

GLESSING 361

takes his spyglass from her:

GLESSING
Needs his head examined. She's flying the Deputy Superintendent's pennant.
(to Struan)
What's so urgent that Mr. Monsey'd leave Macao in this weather?

(continued)

361 CONT'D (2)

GLESSING (continued)
(Struan shrugs)
With your permission I'll signal her to your wharf, Mr. Struan.

Struan nods, picks up his coat, glances at the barometer:

STRUAN (appalled)
It's 29.4!

He rushes outside, followed by Glessing...

362 STRUAN AND GLESSING/CULUM AND TESS

peer to the north...

363 HIDEOUS BLACK CLOUDS

and no division between heaven and sea. Gusts are heavy...

364 STRUAN

turns and runs for Happy Valley. Blinding rain squall:

STRUAN
Batten down - good joss!

He runs through the storm for his life...

365 THE LORCHA

is heading for Happy Valley. A squall line rushes at her and tears most of her sails off but she rightens and plows nauseatingly for the berth...

366 ABOARD CHINA CLOUD - ORLOV

takes a last look around and then pulls down the hatch. The sea begins to be whipped furiously...

367 THE FORE HAUSERS OF HMS VENGEANCE

begin to shriek. The wind's howl takes over...

368 STRUAN IN HAPPY VALLEY

runs for the wharf which the lorcha has almost reached. A sailor jumps ashore - misses his footing and is cut in half. Struan catches the fore-hauser - drops it over a stanchion. The wind builds furiously whipping them. He shouts to them to follow but

they can't hear. He heads for the factory as a violent gust catches them, almost bowls them over... 368 CONT'D (2)

IN THE FOYER STRUAN 369

holds the door open and the men pile in. Then they fight it closed. The Captain is a young, interesting man - VASSERLY - SMYTH - his passenger, balding, MONSEY, Deputy Superintendent of Trade:

STRUAN
What the devil're you doing at sea on a day like this?

VASSERLY-SMYTH
I was ordered to sea. By a maniac.

MONSEY
The new Superintendent of Trade - Sir Clyde Whalen.
(at Struan's look)
Only God saved us this time, Tai-Pan. Never seen such seas!
(drops his voice)
He's a monster! Four minutes after he arrived I was in his cabin. He gave me his credentials and ordered me here. Longstaff's to leave immediately - then HE will arrive.

STRUAN
Why didn't he come here direct?

MONSEY
Can't have two Plenipotentiaries here at the same time - protocol and all that.
(angrily)
Blasted man - nearly killed me. Last thing he said to me was "Far as I'm concerned that bloody rock can sink!" Do you have any brandy - there's a good chap?

VASSERLY-SMYTH
That ships my first command. I've only been in these waters a few months. What happens in a typhoon?

STRUAN
The Supreme Winds come out of the gale at you.

VASSERLY-SMYTH
What're they?

369 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
Gusts. Squalls. Sometimes they're called the Devil Winds.

CUT TO:

370 CAMERA SLAMS TOWARDS HONG KONG

riding the tail of a Devil wind. The tops of the waves are clawed off and hurled before the wind. Chaos as a clean swath is torn from the Dockyard and township and another out of Tai-ping-shan...

371 ANOTHER DEVIL WIND

falls on the ships in the harbour, touching some but slamming head-on into Resting Cloud. The hausers part and the hulk is adrift. Water boils alongside as another wind smashes her ashore into the sampan village. Hundreds of men, women and children are drowning in the blinding rain - wind...

372 ABOARD WHITE WITCH - BROCK

holds onto his bunk. Liza and the child are strapped into the other. No sound but the frantic howling of the tempest...

373 IN THE STRUAN RESIDENCE - MAY-MAY

is playing mahjong with Yin-hsi, Lim Din, and Ah Sam. The wind howls outside but they pay it no attention - safe in the lee of the wind. May-may slams down a tile and picks up another. Struan pokes his head in to see they are all right:

MAY-MAY
Don't you go out anymores or I'll be very unhappy sad. I lose four game already - can you give me twenty cash?

STRUAN
Pay your own debts!

She laughs, toys with her jade locket...

374 ANOTHER DEVIL WIND RUSHES AT TAI-PING-SHAN

and claws fifty shacks into the air and smashes them against the Peak a mile away...

375 GORDON CHEN IN HIS CELLAR

looks up at the noise above. The candle gutters slightly but

375 CONT'D (2)

stays nicely alight. The cellar is spacious. Neat files marked: Loans - Mortgages - Many different businesses - Deeds. Bolts of expensive cloth. Wine barrels. Boxes of precious stones. And in one corner a very expensive bed and a very expensive concubine nibbling sweetmeats. He sighs and climbs into bed beside her, sips some tea...

ANOTHER DEVIL WIND 376

rushes at Glessing's Point. The flagpole bends like a matchstick then snaps off and flies like a javelin at the Harbour Master's office...

IN THE HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE - CULUM AND TESS AND GLESSING 377

are sitting around the fire, listening to the storm. Everything is still for a moment. Then the mast punches through the wall and carries away Glessing's arm and smashes through the far wall scattering the coal fire, hurling Tess and Culum aside. Her dress is afire. Culum drags himself up and beats it out. The gale howls, groping at them thru the holes in the walls. Then they become aware of screaming. Appalled they look at Glessing. Culum forces his horror away - begins searching for a piece of rope for a tourniquet - finds one. Tess stands paralysed, almost retching:

CULUM (shouting above the wind)
Help me!
(she makes no move, so he yells at her)
God's Blood, help me!
He'll bleed to death.

Frightened, she rushes to obey...

ABOARD THE COOPER HULK - COOPER 378

is in a deep sea-chair hanging on. The ship is heeling but not dangerously. The sound of the storm increases. Cooper sips his wine thoughtfully...

ONE OF THE TWO FORE HAUSERS 379

part like a cannon shot and the whole hulk shudders...

THE FORESHORE OF GLESSING'S POINT 380

where the tempest is driving the sea into the shore. Anything not bolted down is torn into the rain-wind and hurled before it. A ramshackle house is peeled away and vanishes. A longboat

380 CONT'D (2)

hurtles madly up the shore to crash into a building, tearing a gaping hole in it. Then a Devil Wind comes again and obliterates the flimsy structure and sails the longboat drunkenly into more havoc...

CHINA CLOUD 381

under the siege of the wind. Her hausers stretch and hummmm. Grey-white-grey seas with no surface - only a boiling cauldron of wind-foam. A halyard parts - the jib is carried away. The ship points into wind trembling....

CAMERA RIDES THE WIND 382

outside the harbour, hurls towards the narrow neck of the East channel. Monstrous seas make the violence in the harbour seem like a millpond. The white sheets of foam sea hurl at the channel - fail to get thru and fall back - to rear up and be hurled shrieking at the mountain tops...

THE HULK OF RESTING CLOUD 383

on her beam ends being ground into the sampan village. Another Devil Wind drives her deeper - obliterates more of the tiny craft - incredibly the majority seem untouched...

IN STRUAN'S RESIDENCE IN HAPPY VALLEY - STRUAN 384

is walking a corridor, checking shutters. Then a barrage of Devil Winds. Sounds of windows caving in. He turns and runs for the stairs...

MAY-MAY/YIN-HSI AND AH SAM 385

are cowering beside the bed. Struan hurls the door open as the winds crescendo. Abrupt dead silence! Hurting. Sound of water dripping. The blackness outside vanishes. Sunlight:

MAY-MAY
Wat's happening?

Struan unbolts the window - then the shutters. He gasps as hot dry air swarms in - stares astounded at the harbour...

ALL THE SHIPS 386

except Resting Cloud are snug at their moorings. Resting Cloud is on her side in the sampan village and the budding township is hurt badly. And Tai-ping-shan. But the fleet's untouched! Feathers of clouds - and sunshine and silence...

BUT THE SEA OF THE HARBOUR 387

has gone mad. Pyramidal waves come from all quarters at once. And all around is an encircling screen of gigantic, incredibly beautiful thunderclouds which tower sixty thousand feet to peerless blue sky...

STRUAN 388

is awed:

STRUAN
We're in the vortex - the eye of the storm. We must be the first persons to ever see....the inside!

MAY-MAY
It's very fantastical - that's certain Tai-Pan!

STRUAN (almost to himself)
I thought the fleet would have vanished - but it's safe - safe!
(his excitement vanishes)
Come on!

He picks up May-may and hurries out...

IN THE CORRIDOR STRUAN 389

heads for the far end of the residence choosing the opposite side of the house, the North end...

IN THE NEW QUARTERS SOME WINDOWS 390

are out. Glass everywhere...

STRUAN
Stay here.

MAY-MAY
But Tai-Pan the other place is better.

STRUAN
Do as you're told!

He runs out. May-may shrugs. They crowd the windows...

OUTSIDE THE RESIDENCE MONSEY - VASSERLY-SMYTH 391

and many seamen are staring up at the surrounding cathedral-like thunderclouds:

MONSEY
Beautiful! Well I'd better find Longstaff.

He hurries down the path towards Glessing's Point. Vasserly-Smyth stares blankly at his ship, still safe:

VASSERLY-SMYTH
You beauty - you're still afloat!

CUT TO:

NEAR GLESSING'S POINT - TINY FIGURES 392

come out of cellars and houses and stand around. Incredible silence. Voices can be heard for miles. Destruction on land but the fleet's snug. A growing cheer - taken up by sailors aboard the ships...

ABOARD CHINA CLOUD - ORLOV 393

is as astounded as everyone. Then he looks shorewards. The distant figure of Struan can be seen rushing down the length of the wharf:

STRUAN (shouting - faint:)
Ahoy - China Cloud! Turn her South...SOUTHHHHHHH! The wind's'll come from the southhhhhhh!

Orlov thinks a moment and then shouts:

ORLOV
Launch the longboat!

The crew rush to obey. Orlov waves at Struan...

STRUAN ON THE WHARF 394

looks at the other ships impotently - too far away to help. Vasserly-Smyth frowns at him:

VASSERLY-SMYTH
South! But the winds are all from the North!

394 CONT'D (2)

STRUAN
The typhoon's a circling mass of air, eh?
(he draws with his hands)
If they're North this side - as soon as we pass out of the vortex they'll come from the South.

Vasserly-Smyth stares at the clouds, filled with fear...

395

THE CIRCLING THUNDERCLOUDS

are moving closer - closer...

396

STRUAN

heads back for the residence - then notices Monsey hurrying out of the valley. A gust of wind. He shouts after him then begins to run for him...

397

MAY-MAY AND YIN-HSI

crowd the windows happily, watching. Wind increasing...

398

ABOARD WHITE WITCH - BROCK, LIZA, LILLIBET

are staring astonished at the surrounding walls of thunderclouds. The crew gawking too:

LILLIBET
Oh look! Aren't the trees funny!

They look at the island. The trees are stripped of leaves - stark. Tiny figures can be seen moving about. Brock looks back at the thunderclouds. Perceptibly nearer:

BROCK (gently)
Get below, luv. You too Liza.

They stare at him bewildered - then do as ordered:

BROCK
Captain Pennyworth!

PENNYWORTH
Aye aye sorr!

BROCK
Best make your peace with your Maker. Only HE knows what's behind those devil clouds. All hands below decks!

He picks up his telescope....

399 THRU THE TELESCOPE

Struan is hurrying after Monsey....

400 BROCK

snaps the telescope to, with finality:

BROCK
Best get inside, Dirk.

A last grim look - then he bolts the hatch...

401 STRUAN IN HAPPY VALLEY

runs harder. A gust of wind - fuller . The thunderclouds are quickening their approach:

STRUAN (shouts)
Monseyyyyyy!

But Monsey either cannot hear or won't hear. Struan hesitates. Then a spatter of rain and he hares back for the residence...

402 AT GLESSING'S POINT CULUM AND TESS

are petrified at the havoc and the encroaching clouds:

CULUM
If we get out of this alive I
--I'm saying we should go home
as soon as possible.

TESS
Yes. We'd - we'd better get inside.

403 IN THE HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE

the place is a shambles. Tess kneels beside Glessing who is grey-faced, still alive:

TESS
Poor George.

Culum bolts the door. Sound of the wind picking up. And rain...

404 THE LONGBOAT OF CHINA CLOUD

desperately pulls the ship's head to the south - Orlov shouting encouragement above the keening of the growing wind. The crew get her almost south then scramble aboard. McKay tries to tie the longboat up but it is snatched out of his grasp and he and Orlov flee below...

STRUAN NEARS HIS RESIDENCE 405

as a gust catches him, almost knocks him over. Raining heavily now. He glances back squinting into the rain-wind...

THE TINY RUNNING FIGURE OF MONSEY 406

begins to disappear into the clouds. Then is wafted heavenwards like a broken leaf...

STRUAN 407

charges for the door and just makes it. Rain horizontal...

IN THE FOYER - STRUAN 408

shoves the door closed with all his strength but a Devil Wind smashes it open and hurls him aside and blows out all the ground floor windows and is gone...

CHINA CLOUD 409

swirls the last few degrees south and settles nicely. But...

THE WHITE WITCH 410

still pointing north, pitches drunkenly as the full force of the gale hits her. She heels on her beam ends and then, by some miracle rights herself...

IN THE MAIN CABIN - BROCK 411

shouts encouragement to Liza and Lillibet. Water hammers against the bolted cabin door - begins seeping under it. A monstrous CRACK! A hauser gone...

THE WHITE WITCH 412

gropes leadened for wind - shuddering....

CAMERA RIDES THE TAIL OF A DEVIL WIND 413

that hacks across the harbour - the seas worse than before and the winds - slams into the Cooper hulk. The hausers part and the hulk is adrift on her beam ends. She smashes into a frigate, almost tears her loose - then careens out of control across the harbour dying...

IN THE FOYER OF THE RESIDENCE - STRUAN 414

picks himself up, astonished to be alive. The howl of the gale sucks everything loose out thru the broken windows into the frightening blackness and horizontal torrent. The broken body of Vasserly-Smyth is crushed into a corner. Struan heads for the north side...

MAY-MAY/YIN-HSI AND AH SAM 415

are comfortable against one wall. Here, in the lee of the wind, it is calmer. Not so tempestuous. Struan comes in:

MAY-MAY (shouts above the wind)
I'm very pleasurable happy to see you Tai-Pan.

STRUAN
Me too, Tai-tai.

MAY-MAY
But I think this noise is all very stinky.

STRUAN
Worse is over now. Three or four hours then finish.

He puts his arm around her, settles himself...

THE COOPER HULK 416

is being driven by the winds across the harbour towards the rocks at Kowloon Point. A huge squall twists her, then drives her onto the rocks. She shrieks in agony and rears up. Then a Devil Wind catches her and punches her above the surf on her side...

A DEVIL WIND 417

falls on Tai-ping-shan and cuts another swathe clean...

ABOARD WHITE WITCH - BROCK 418

holds on. An enormous crack! Sound of the mast crashing to the deck. He fights out of the cabin...

UP A GANGWAY 419

and up to the now broken hatch. He peers on deck. The mainmast is down - the second mast comes crashing down...

419 CONT'D (2)

BROCK (roars)
All hands on deck - for your lives!

The tangled rigging is heeling the ship over dangerously. Unless it is cut adrift the ship will be pulled under. Brock grabs a fire axe and...

GOES ON DECK 420

onto the holocaust - a pygmy against the elements...

FROM THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE - LOOKING DOWN ON HAPPY VALLEY 421

below. Chaos. Evil colors. And evil sea. Struan's cottage is holding firm but the garden has vanished and the wall. Skeletons of buildings are down - as though trampled by a giant foot. Only the Residence is whole. Vast. Inviolate. Then the Devil Winds attack it. Seemingly concentrating on it. Wind after wind. More. Always down the funnel that the mountains make towards the factory...

IN THEIR QUARTERS TO THE SOUTH STRUAN AND MAY-MAY 422

sit against the wall. The barrage of winds increase. Staggering. May-may is imperturbable:

MAY-MAY
When should we leave, Tai-Pan? I'm very gracious urgent to marriage.

STRUAN
Three months.

Yin-hsi is terrified and she cowers nearer. He puts his arm around her and May-may is happy about that. A vast cannonade and the sound of windows blowing all around them:

MAY-MAY
I'm fantastical happy my joss gave me you, Tai-Pan.

And she kisses him on the ear and they laugh together. Sound of the nails in the building screaming against the untoward pull. Then...

THE ROOF 423

is peeled off by a Devil Wind...

THE TOP FLOOR 424

begins to disintegrate...

STRUAN 425

holds on to May-may - Yin-hsi is sucked away by the maelstrom - shouts above the violence:

STRUAN (shouting)
Hold on, Tai-tai! Don't give up!

MAY-MAY
I love you, husband.

AND THEN, FROM THE RIDGE 426

above the valley CAMERA rides the Devil Winds a last time - slamming down at the residence into darkness.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS AND SILENCE --- 427

---the silence almost overpowering. Then the gentle sound of dripping water. CAMERA slowly moves into the light, seeing droplets of water - like tears - and then the harbour and sunshine through wreckage. CAMERA moves over the wreckage - through it. Voices distant - and the sounds of Hong Kong. Sampans and junks ply their way as always. Or fish as always. Longboats scurry to and fro, the fleet is safe - China Cloud and the White Witch. Tess, bruised and dishevelled is staring towards CAMERA. Culum, approaching, is numbly searching the wreckage, Glessing's blood on his hands and clothes. Then he stops and moves away a shattered timber. He stares down. Then, brokenly, backs off...

UNNOTICED A TINY AVALANCE 428

of rubble cascades,and, mixed with it May-may's fractured jade locket. The locket comes to rest. The half coin slips out of it. Rain tears fall on them softly...

TESS 429

watches Culum. In misery he joins her, nods. Her eyes fill with tears. Hand in hand they turn and leave...

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP - HAPPY VALLEY 430

is desolate like the residence - Tess and Culum tiny, far below. CAMERA (from helicopter) wanders away to see the whole of Glessing's Point and the figures of the traders grimly picking up the pieces of their shattered township. Already one or two are building. Already sedan chairs ply their trade - street vendors are selling foods - beggars begging.

CUT TO:

IN THE PRINTING SHOP - SKINNER 431

is looking at the wreckage of the press. Orlov comes in:

ORLAV (cheerfully)
Beautiful day, eh?

Skinner grunts sourly, then notices Culum and Tess passing. Orlov gasps seeing blood on Culum's hands and clothes...

CULUM AND TESS - ON QUEEN'S ROAD 432

walk, hardly noticing where they are. Skinner intercepts them:

SKINNER
'cuse me, Culum - where's the Tai-Pan?

CULUM
What?

SKINNER
Where's the Tai-Pan? I've just heard Whalen's in Macao and I've got to see ---

CULUM
The Tai-Pan's dead.

SKINNER (blankly)
What!

CULUM (as though explaining to himself)
In Happy Valley. He and -- they -- they looked -- just asleep.

Skinner stares at him - then rushes back past Orlov:

TESS (afraid)
Come on' luv - best we go to the White Witch. Find Dad.

CULUM (helplessly)
You go - I'll - I'll come later please...

He wanders off - she bites her lips - then hurries off...

IN THE PRINTING SHOP - SKINNER 433

is frantically type-setting, Orlov a graven image:

ORLOV
God cursed Storm! I'm glad he didn't live to see the death of Hong Kong.

433 CONT'D (2)

SKINNER (laughs)
The birth, you mean. Look at the fleet. The worst typhoon in history put Hong Kong to the test. Where's the strength of the British Empire, eh? On sea power. Even an Irish burk like Whalen's got to see that.

ORLOV (after pause)
What are you going to say about him?

SKINNER
The Tai-Pan?

He reaches intp a drawer, tosses over a sheaf of pages:

SKINNER
I did his obit a few days ago.
(grim smile)
Brock's too - just in case.
Nothing's changed.

CUT TO:

A LONGBOAT 434

is tying up at a wharf. Cooper tattered and bruised being helped out of it, by Bryan and other traders. They see Culum wandering blankly nearby - passers watch him strangely, some shake their heads sadly. Cooper goes up to him:

COOPER
Bad joss, Culum, terrible.

CULUM
Thank you. If - if you'll excuse me...

He walks off, shakily. Bryan joins Cooper:

COOPER
Poor devil. He looks frightened out of his wits.

BRYAN
I don't wonder - what with Glessing and the Tai-Pan. And Brock still alive.

COOPER
Will Glessing live?

BRYAN
So they say.

Cooper looks after Culum. A gathering thought:

434 CONT'D (2)

BRYAN
Why the smile, Jeff?

COOPER
A passing thought.

BRYAN
The new Noble House: Cooper - Struan?

COOPER
That's better than Brock - Struan, isn't it?

BRYAN (after pause)
I'll help - for a partnership.

COOPER
Done, but I'm Tai-Pan.

CUT TO:

A MARINE MESSENGER 435

hurries through the debris near Glessing's Point. His pace quickens as he sees Culum - wandering miserably along the foreshore. No salute - no politeness - open contempt:

MESSENGER
His Excellency wants you right smartly! Come on lad! Hurry it up!

CULUM
Yes - yes of course.

CUT TO:

LONGSTAFF - IN THE MAIN CABIN - ABOARD HMS VENGEANCE 436

sips his sherry. Culum stands - he sits:

LONGSTAFF
Papers, Culum. Didn't he mention papers to you?

CULUM
No - no sir.

Longstaff hides his delight that Culum's not privvy to them:

LONGSTAFF (curt)
He borrowed some papers - highly secret papers. And maps. Get them immediately - they'd be in his safe. Secret documents concerning a foreign power.

CULUM
Safe?

436 CONT'D (2)

LONGSTAFF (sharply)
Yes, safe! Come on lad! Terrible about your father, but that's that. The living must, er, continue to live. Get those papers forthwith and keep this to yourself! You know the punishment for treason?

CULUM (frightened)
Yes sir!

LONGSTAFF
Be back by sundown.
(calls out)
Sentry!

SENTRY
Yessir.

LONGSTAFF
Show Master Culum ashore.

Culum almost stumbles out, Longstaff's contempt open.

CUT TO:

IN THE SERENE TEMPLE - GORDON CHEN 437

kowtows before the Buddha. Then he sits back on his heels, a great sadness in him. He contemplates the smile of the Buddha. Quietly - musing:

GORDON CHEN
What to do now? -----
---No more weeping----
(sighs heavily)
The Noble House is dead ---Culum ---pity about him. Pity --- I could help him conquer Brock....
(after pause)
Go - pay your respects to Culum - then forget him. You're Tai-Pan here in Tai-ping-shan - be content with that.
(to the statue)
I will make a tablet for my father - I will fetch Duncan from Macao and bring him up as my own. And I will start a Dynasty.

He kowtows again. Then walks out, taller, stronger, son of the father.

CUT TO:

ABOARD RESTING CLOUD - CULUM 438

is picking his way miserably below decks to Struan's quarters. The decks arq canted and he slips and slides. He sees Lim Din on guard against looters:

LIM DIN
Tai-Pan dead?

CULUM
Yes.
(no sign from Lim Din)
When Tai-Pan important papers hav,
---where put, heya?

Lim Din opens the door motions him to follow...

IN STRUAN'S QUARTERS - LIM DIN 439

points to a wall safe:

CULUM
Where key-ah?

Lim Din shrugs. Culum wipes the fear sweat away:

CULUM
Where would he ---in his pocket?

More fear swarms him...

BROCK 440

walks into the cabin, unnoticed by Culum for a moment. He sees the youth's fear and his helplessness:

BROCK
I came as soon as I heard.

CULUM (relieved)
Oh hello Mr. Brock.

BROCK
Don't worry. I'll do everything for you.

CULUM (weakly)
Oh thank you Mr. Brock.

BROCK
I sent orders aboard China Cloud to fly the flag at half mast - and went to the residence. I laid him out proper and put her out of sight.
(continued)

440 CONT'D (2)

BROCK (continued)
We'll give him a great funeral and bury her private - no point in stirring up scandals, eh?

CULUM
No, of course - thank you.

BROCK
We're joining Brock's and Struan's Culum. That's best. Best for all. Now The Noble House is Brock-Struan. I'll draw up the papers immediate - and that's finished.
(hard)
Go aboard White Witch - Tess needs comforting.

CULUM
If...if you don't mind I - I'll come along later.

BROCK
Be aboard by sundown.

Brock leaves. Culum wipes the sweat off his brow. Lim Din watches silently.

CUT TO:

ON THE KNOLL NEAR SUNSET 441

The shadows are long. Below is the shattered residence. Culum sits, lost in his self hating terror - wrapped in it. A shadow moves...

GORDON CHEN'S VOICE
Hello.

GORDON CHEN 442

stares gravely at Culum:

CULUM
Hello - please leave me alone.

GORDON CHEN
I'm so sorry. So sorry. It was joss.

CULUM
I hate that word. For the love of God leave me alone!

Culum looks at the sunset and the harbour. Below...

SKINNER AND ORLOV 443

are approaching - the marine messenger from another direction...

CULUM 444

shudders, helpless and lost...

GORDON CHEN 445

hesitates. Then the wind touches him, something touches him on the knoll - perhaps he remembers Culum at the land sale. So he changes his plan - and gives face - and repays the debt:

GORDON CHEN
I know this isn't the time to bring it up, Tai-Pan, but father doubled my loan to forty thousand and I need the money urgently.

CULUM
What?

GORDON CHEN
Father and I had a, er secret series of businesses, Tai-Pan. Of course you inherit his share - one third. Would you authorize the new loan? Then there's some important matters about the cinchona imports we should discuss.

CULUM
You said 'Tai-Pan'. You called me Tai-Pan.

GORDON CHEN
Well you are, aren't you?

The enormity of what Gordon Chen has said - the face he has been given - sweeps into Culum's soul. Cleaning it.

MESSENGER'S VOICE (sharply)
Here - you! His Excellency told you to be aboard at sunset!

CULUM 446

turns to look at them:

ORLOV
Brock sent orders aboard my ship to lower the flag! Do I take orders from him now?

446 CONT'D (2)

SKINNER
Brock's arranging the funeral, lad. Are Brock's and Struan's one company now?

CULUM (shakily to the messenger)
I'll...I'll be aboard soon - as soon as possible.

MESSENGER
He wants you now!

CULUM (flares)
I'm busy. Tell him I'm busy, by God!
(to Skinner)
My...my brother will arrange the funeral. Father and...and his wife will be buried together.

SKINNER (shocked)
His wife?

CULUM
Yes, er, Orlov married them months ago. Didn't you?
(Orlov looks blank - he rushes on)
...and she was a Christian. Fly our flag at the masthead - then go aboard White Witch and fetch my wife ashore.

ORLOV
Fetch, did you say?

CULUM
Yes. And here ---
(he opens the little gold case - finds Brock's coins)
--give these to Brock with my compliments. Tell him I said to buy himself a coffin!
(to Gordon)
You get the extra loan tomorrow, Gordon - after I've seen the accounts.

He pushes through them and walks down the hill, desperately hoping that he has dominated them. They watch him strangely...

CULUM AND THEM (from helicopter) 447

as he walks away - their voices come over:

447
CONT'D
(2)

ORLOV - MESSENGER -
SKINNER - GORDON CHEN

Yes, Tai-Pan!

Culum grows a little. As they all rush to obey, he wonders about the papers and why Longstaff wants them - that he will decide about them when he has read them. Now CAMERA sees all the emptiness of Happy Valley. Then Glessing's Point and the harbour and the fleet and junks and all Hong Kong and the people of Hong Kong - picking up the pieces, beginning again. Always beginning again.

FADE OUT.

THE END